

Impulsivity in the School-Aged Child

Behavioral Strategies for Children at Home and School

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Fundamental Principle

Don't attempt to change the person...change the environment around the person!

General Behavioral Management

- **A-B-Cs of Behaviorism**

- **Four-Term Contingency**

- 1. Antecedent

- 2. Behavior

- 3. Consequence

- 4. Setting Events

- **Helps identify what is maintaining or exacerbating the behavior**

- **Sets the stage for change**

- **Adults manage the A or the C**

- **Help parents/teachers learn to focus on behavioral observations, not general impressions**

- **Functional Behavior Analysis**

General Behavioral Management

- **Effective vs. Ineffective Commands**
(Perfect example of Antecedent management)
 - Effective
 - Direct
 - Simple
 - Clear
 - Maintain eye contact

General Behavioral Management

- **Effective vs. Ineffective Commands**
 - **Ineffective**
 - Indirect (*“I need you to...”*)
 - Multiple
 - Confusing/complicated
 - Question form (*“Why don’t you...?”*)
 - Always evaluate compliance

General Behavioral Management

- Positive Reinforcement

- Verbal praise
- Reward appropriate behavior
- Attention

- *All too often, kids with ADHD receive overwhelmingly negative feedback*

- *“Stop tapping your pencil!”*

- *“You’re not paying attention!”*

- *“You didn’t follow the instructions.”*

- More effective to place attention on positive attributes, competencies, strengths, abilities

General Behavioral Management

- *What makes positive reinforcement effective?*
 - Immediacy of feedback
 - Valued or meaningful
 - Labeled
 - Developmentally appropriate

Things That Work

Physical Design

- Minimize transitions
- Avoid chronic changes in schedules
- Use a structured, well-organized schedule; post the daily schedule
- What just happened? What happens next?
- Schedule academic subjects during morning hours

Communication Design

- Use direct commands, avoid unimportant detail
- Subtle, non-verbal redirection
- Repeat and redirect
- Keep your word; do what you say and say what you do
- Be enthusiastic, active
- Have child repeat instructions
- Use the **Four Whats** persistently

THE FOUR WHATS

- 1) **WHAT** did you do?
- 2) **WHAT** happened when you did that?
- 3) **WHAT** could have you done differently?
- 4) **WHAT** could have happened had you done that?

Things That Work

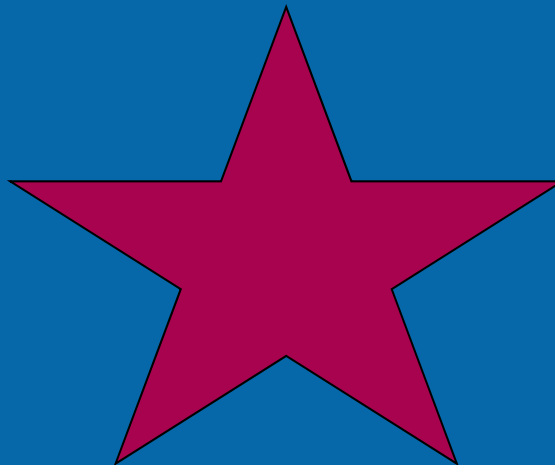
- Social & Behavioral Design
 - “Surround” the student with appropriate role models; cooperative/collaborative learning
 - Do not rule out the opportunity for students to talk or move when they must wait
 - Develop a clear hierarchy of consequences and consistently use them contingent to specific behavior
 - Use preferred activities rather than concrete rewards in your reinforcement hierarchy
 - Parents organize a study space at home; schedule routines with set times to study
 - Parents review completed work (but not do it) and assist with organizing the child’s schedule and materials

School/Home Based Interventions

- Manage the child's environment, not the child him/herself
 - Child may see it as, "There's something wrong with me."
 - Instead, focus the parent/teacher and child on managing personal style
- Distinguish issues of NONCOMPLIANCE from issues of COMPETENCE
- Clear expectations and contingencies increase a child's internal awareness and aid in self-regulation...**executive function**
- Teach or reinforce use of self-monitoring techniques/skills (S.T.A.R. Method)

The Star Method

- STOP
- THINK
- ACT
- REVIEW



School/Home Based Interventions

- Behavior Contracts, Star/Sticker Charts & Contingencies
(*Perfect example of Consequence management*)
 - Parents or teachers are in charge of the consequences and the child is in charge of the behavior
 - NOT about *bribing* a child to “do something”
 - NOT about *motivation*

Daily Report Cards (DRCs)

- Identify, monitor, and change problematic behavior
- Provide regular, consistent communication between parent and teacher(s)
- Provide children with clear expectations and consequences
 - Applies to all of us (e.g., job expectations)
 - Removes any uncertainty or ambiguity

Daily Report Cards (DRCs)

- **Effective rewards or privileges are:**
 - Hierarchical
 - Contingent
 - Valued/meaningful
 - Flexible
 - Reasonable

**Daily Report Card
TARGET BEHAVIORS**

1) _____ YES / NO

2) _____ YES / NO

3) _____ YES / NO

4) _____ YES / NO

DATE: _____

TOTAL: _____

**Daily Report Card
TARGET BEHAVIORS**

1) _____ YES / NO

2) _____ YES / NO

3) _____ YES / NO

4) _____ YES / NO

DATE: _____

TOTAL: _____

Daily Report Cards (DRCs)

What do parents and teachers need to know?

- Change takes time
 - May actually get worse before it gets better
- DRCs require continual monitoring & adjusting
 - Don't simply put it in place and leave "as is"
 - Don't abandon if not working initially
- Consistency is crucial
 - Children need to know you're going to follow through
 - “Do what you say and say what you do”

School/Home Based Interventions

- **Time-Out:**
 - Use for only a few behaviors (e.g., aggression, destruction of property)
 - Time out of from positive reinforcement
 - Avoid use as a threat (“If you don’t ____, then ____!”)
 - Area (low stimulus); Length (1 minute/year of age); Consistency
- **Premack Principle: “If, then” / “When, then” / “Once, then”**
- **Parent Training Groups**
 - Psychoeducational & Supportive
 - Switching philosophy...create new possibility or new relationship
 - Change question from “Why can’t s/he?” to “How can s/he?”
- **ADHD Coaching**
 - Helpful with preteen/adolescents
 - Teach organizational skills (e.g., assign deadlines, planners/PDAs)
 - Practice test-taking skills (e.g., budget time, main points with essays)

Sources of Breakdown

- To what is the teacher paying attention?
 - Is 25% or more of the teacher's attention on child behavior that interferes with learning?
 - Does the teacher spend 25% or more of his/her time consequating inappropriate behavior?
- Is the teacher the primary or only dispenser of consequences?
 - Can other contingencies take over?
- Quality of Relationship (1-10 Scale)

Sources of Breakdown

- Does the teacher have sufficient available consequences and are these consequences hierarchical?
- Does the teacher *consistently* apply these consequences contingent on behavior?
- Is there a system *physically in the room* which identifies daily schedule?
- Is there a good balance between what is interesting and what is important?

ADHD: When to consider an evaluation?

ADHD

Domains of Impairment

- **Peer relationships**
- **Family relationships**
- **Adult relationships**
- **School or occupational functioning**
- **Leisure activities**

WHAT IS ATTENTION?

Executive Function vs. Motivation

*Attention as an “act of will”, is
DIRECTED.*

*Attention in cases of intrinsic interest, is
FASCINATION.*

(Richard M. Gale, in The Cambridge Companion to William James, p. 57)

Six Problems of Attention

- **Orient** unidirectionally; stimulus detection
 - (start task / orient to speaker)
- **Sustain orientation**; filtering competing stimuli
 - (attend to speaker/task)
- **Discriminate** detected information as meaningful
 - (encode information; speaking/task is meaningful)
- **Shift attention** appropriately
 - (stop / start on demand)
- **Inhibit involuntary shifts** of attention
 - (limit shifts of attention; inhibit distractibility)
- **Inhibit responses**; organize action
 - (behavior is efficient & goal-directed)

M. Posner, 2002

THE HUNTER VS. THE FARMER

Hunter

- Immediate consequences
- Exciting, different
- Ever changing landscape
- Shifting attention
- Limited organization and short-term planning necessary
- *Fascination*

Farmer

- Delayed gratification
- Tedious, monotonous
- Same environment
- Sustained attention
- Strict organization and long-term planning necessary
- *Directed attention*

ADHD

Clinical Presentation

- **Motor restlessness (always on the go)**
- **Aggressive (hits others)**
- **Spills things**
- **Insatiable curiosity**
- **“Dangerously daring”**
- **Vigorous and often destructive play (breakage of toys and household objects; accidental injuries common)**
- **Demanding, argumentative**
- **Noisy, interrupts**
- **Excessive temper tantrums (more severe and frequent)**
- **Low levels of compliance**

ADHD

Clinical Presentation

- Easily distracted
- Homework poorly organized, contains careless errors, often not completed
- Blurts out answers before question completed (often disruptive in class)
- Often interrupts or intrudes on others and displays aggression (difficulties in peer relationships)
- Fails to wait turn in games
- Often out of seat
- Perception of “immaturity” (unwilling or unable to complete chores at home)

Dopamine Pathways:

Important Projections to Cortical Areas

- Attention to detail
 - Poor generation of response alternatives
 - Perseveration
 - Working memory
 - Greater impulsivity
 - Deficits in social functioning
 - Emotional lability
 - Lack of inhibitory control
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Additional Resources

- Organizations:
 - Children & Adults with ADHD (CHADD):
www.chadd.org
 - Attention Deficit Disorder Association (ADDA):
www.add.org
 - National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH):
www.nimh.nih.gov
 - ADDitude Magazine:
www.additudemag.com
- Setting up a DRC:
 - SUNY at Buffalo, Center for Children & Families
www.wings.buffalo.edu/psychology/adhd/
- Finding reading material & other resources:
 - ADD Warehouse:
www.addwarehouse.com