



Research Brief

Comprehensive Behavioral Support in the Community

Carr, E.G., Levin, L., McConnachie, G., Carlson, J.I., Kemp, D.C., Smith, C. E., & Magito McLaughlin, D. (1999). Comprehensive multisituational intervention for problem behavior in the community: Long-term Maintenance and social validation. *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions*, 1, 5-25.

Why was it conducted?

Assessment and intervention approaches are needed that can be effectively and comprehensively applied within the community. The purpose of this study was to develop strategies for dealing with problem behavior in the community over long periods of time and across many different situations.

Who participated?

Three individuals with autism and/or mental retardation (ages 14, 17, and 38 years at the start of the study) participated. A variety of intervention agents participated as well including parents, siblings, teachers, and community residence staff.

What was done?

Comprehensive functional behavioral assessments were carried out continuously over a 5-6 year period. Then, assessment data were used to design multicomponent interventions that changed over time as new assessment data were obtained. Assessment involved a three-component strategy : description of antecedents and consequences, categorization (by behavioral function), and verification (testing the accuracy of hypotheses concerning function). These data drove the creation of a five-component strategy tailored to specific individual needs. The components were: rapport building, functional communication training, building tolerance for delay of reinforcement, providing choices, and embedding/interspersal/behavioral momentum. Intervention efficacy was evaluated by means of a multiple baseline design and a social validity study involving 100 community residence staff.

What were the results?

1. There were dramatic improvements in the participants' lifestyle, functional communication skills, and problem behavior.
2. The intervention proved to be practical in that parents, teachers, job coaches, community residence staff, and others in the community were able to implement it efficiently.

3. Long-term maintenance of intervention effects (ranging from 1.5 to 2.5 years in duration) were observed.
4. Community residence staff (N=100) judged the intervention effects to be socially valid in that problem behavior was rated as much less severe and dangerous.

What are the implications?

Future community-based intervention research will need to focus on these challenges:

1. Assessment: shifting from a near exclusive focus on problem behavior to a focus on quality of living environments and competence of skill repertoires.
2. Intervention: an increased focus is necessary with respect to redesigning the environment, long-term maintenance of change strategies, proactive approaches, building participant independence, and developing community-based evaluation measures.
3. Outcomes: a greater emphasis on lifestyle change and life-span perspectives is necessary.

Other resources

Carr, E.G., Levin, L., McConnachie, G., Carlson, J.I., Kemp, D.C., & Smith, C.E. (1994). Communication-based intervention for problem behavior. A user's guide for producing positive change. Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes.

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