Today’s Learning Objectives

Attendees will learn how to:
1. Effectively respond to common statements of resistance to providing reinforcement
2. Explain five key factors that may influence the effectiveness of reinforcement systems
3. Learn to use two practical tools for assessing and improving alignment of reinforcement plans to effective parameters

Choice in Interventions & Coping Planning

**Choice in Interventions**
Anderson & Daly (2013)
- Well established proactive intervention for increasing commitment
- Consistent with partnership/collaboration
- Choice makes task (i.e. rewards) less aversive by letting the consultee select a more preferred task

Procedure: Provide 3 function-based appropriate interventions and allow consultee to choose which one to implement.

**Coping Planning**
Sanetti, Collier-Meece, Long, Byerly, & Kratochwill (2015)
- Identify potential barriers to implementation
- Collaborate to develop strategies when barriers are encountered

Procedure: Ask consultee to identify 1-2 barriers that might interfere with their ability to implement the intervention. Brainstorm strategies to minimize or eliminate barriers. Action plan steps to address barriers.

Reinforcement Systems – Establishing Buy-In

- Builds relationships
- Provides feedback on desired behaviors
- Counters negative traumatic experiences
- “The undermining effect of extrinsic reward on intrinsic motivation remains unproven”
- Builds internal motivation
- Research on ratio of positive-to-corrective statements

Treatment Integrity

High Treatment Integrity
- Positive Student Outcomes: Continue Implementation
- Negative Student Outcomes: Change Intervention

Low Treatment Integrity
- Positive Student Outcomes: Determine Unknown Issue
- Negative Student Outcomes: Promote Treatment Integrity

WHY?

Operationalizing the Problem

Even the best-laid reinforcement plans may fail...

The Plan Itself
- Parameters of reinforcement in the plan were unspecified or inadequate

The Implementation of the Plan
- Parameters of reinforcement in the plan were not implemented with fidelity, which could be due to many factors, such as:
  - Skill deficit
  - Performance deficit
  - Logistical/resource barriers
  - Philosophical barriers and/or resistance

Choice in Interventions & Coping Planning

Choice in Interventions

Coping Planning

Reinforcement Systems – Establishing Buy-In

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Successful Marriages

Business Teams

Learning Supports

5:1
I shouldn’t have to reward a student for doing something that they should be doing anyway.

- That may be true in principle, but if the child’s behavior is as disruptive as you say it is then it will take a bit of extra effort until it is under control.
- Since the child is acting inappropriately, they may not have learned what they should be doing.
- If we reward the behaviors we want to see, he will catch on to what behaviors he should display.
- Everyone needs some type of reinforcement for their behavior – especially when they are not easy to change.
- Most kids respond to social approval/disapproval, which is a type of reinforcement, but for kids who don’t know how to engage in appropriate behaviors or don’t have that kind of history, approval/disapproval may not be enough.
- We don’t plan to provide the rewards forever. Once we see consistent understanding of the appropriate behavior we will fade the rewards.

It isn’t fair to the rest of the class to provide special rewards to one student.

- You could give the reward to the student in private – this would also give them individual positive attention, which would be great.
- You could implement the reward for the whole class.
- Because the student is disruptive to the class, the other students may appreciate an intervention to decrease the problem behavior.
- The other students are likely well aware that this child needs extra help.
- If you thought about this similar to an academic problem, we wouldn’t feel it was unfair to give reading tutoring only to one child, if they were behind in their reading.

Why should the child be reinforced for one good behavior when they have been misbehaving all day?

- This is why we need to make sure the child is reinforced for appropriate behavior more often than for inappropriate behavior.
- Right now, from their perspective, they are being rewarded for the inappropriate behavior – they are getting something out of it (negative attention, delaying or escaping work, etc.)
- If we reinforce the appropriate behavior consistently, they will realize they are only being rewarded when they act appropriately.
- This is why it is important to be specific when we provide praise or rewards so the student is very clear on why they have been reinforced.

Shouldn’t we focus more on punishment instead of “catching” them being good? Aren’t we letting them get away with bad behavior?

- If we use punishment we aren’t providing the student with an opportunity to learn appropriate or replacement behaviors.
- When we focus on inappropriate behavior, we often give lots of attention to that problem behavior, which may increase the problem behavior for many students.
- We don’t want the teacher/school to be associated with punishment and negativity. If we reinforce appropriate behavior we can modify behavior while building a more positive relationship between the student and the teacher/school.

How much reinforcement is OPTIMAL?

- Successful Marriages
- Business Teams
- Learning Supports
- Proactive Interaction
- Behavior Corrections

Successful Marriages: 5:1

5 positive interactions to 1 correction

Do you know your “Love Language”? Just another way of thinking about the Functions of Behavior (i.e., what motivates us)!

The 4 Functions of Behavior: Attention, Access, Escape, Sensory
Functions that behaviors serve:

- Problem Behavior
- Contain/Get Something
- Execute/Avoid Something
- Stimulate/Sensory
- Social
- Tangible/Activity

Parameters of Reinforcement

- Function of Behavior
- Foundation
- Contingency
- Size & Amount
- Variety & Choice
- Immediate & Frequency

Consider...

What is motivating students to engage in the problem behavior?

Ex. Chris engages in disruptive behavior during class in order to obtain peer attention

What is most likely to be a powerful reward?

- iPad time at the end of the day?
- A "no homework pass"?
- An activity with peers?

Ex. Erin engages in non-compliant behavior during class in order to avoid/escape tasks

What is most likely to be a powerful reward?

- iPad time at the end of the day?
- A "no homework pass"?
- An activity with peers?

Consider...

What do my students prefer?

Survey students in order to identify preferences

- Which function?
- Which options within each function are most powerful

Why assume when you can go to the source?

More on this topic later!

Feed the Function!

When we can be sure we’ve established the right reinforcers...

- Consistent Function
- Approved Student Preferences

When we can begin to assess other factors that influence the effectiveness of reinforcement!

Presented by Chris Barclay, PhD, BCBA, NCSP and Erin Crosby, MA, BCBA at APBS 2020
“Rewards Don’t Work!”

*Fine-Tuning Reward Systems to Increase Effectiveness*

**Factors Influencing the Effectiveness of Function-Based Reinforcement**

- **Frequency**
  - How many opportunities are there to earn?

- **Contingency**
  - How consistently does the response match the behavior?

- **Variety/Choice**
  - How well does the reward match students’ varied interests and motivations?

- **Size/Amount**
  - How much reinforcement is provided? How many? For how long?

- **Immediacy**
  - What is the delay between behavior and reinforcement?

**Build SMART Rewards**

- **S**ecure contingency
- **M**atching size
- **A**ttractive variety
- **R**eachable frequency
- **T**imely delivery

**Frequency**

Ideally:

- Initial frequency of R+ slightly exceeds frequency of baseline challenging behavior (e.g., aggression 2x/day → 3 rewards/day)
- Intervals are designed to “guarantee” quick access at outset

**Contingency**

Ideally:

- Reinforcement is provided IF and ONLY IF desired target behavior occurs

**Variety/Choice**

Ideally:

- Reinforcement matches the function of the problem behavior, preferences of the student, and is varied

**Motivating Operations**

- Comfort
- Attention
- Reduced Demands

**Variety/Choice**

- Student can select what is motivating at-the-moment

Presented by Chris Barclay, PhD, BCBA, NCSP and Erin Crosby, MA, BCBA at APBS 2020
**Size/Amount**

**Ideally:**
- Size of reinforcement matches challenge of criteria

**Immediacy**

**Ideally:**
- Reinforcement is provided as immediately as possible after desired behavior

**Tokens**

When paired verbally, can serve as visual support to communicate:
- Expectations
- Positive feedback
- Progress towards goals

**Common Hack #1: Make it Tiny**

- **Too Large and/or Distant**
  - Timeline is distant
    - Elementary age > daily
    - Secondary age > weekly
  - Consider disability impact on delayed gratification
  - Large effort required for a relatively small reward
  - Problem behavior occurs more frequently than student can check progress towards reward

- **Ways to Make it Tiny**
  - More check-ins/reviews with timer goal, using:
    - Smaller rewards
    - Reward time limit
    - Progress tokens
  - Coupon = Immediate delivery, delayed use
  - Start with tiny criteria, then revise with growth
  - Smaller staff delivery effort (stations, checkbox forms)

**Common Hack #2: Brainstorm**

**Poor Contingencies**
- Not feasible for staff to measure the behavior (e.g., know when to reward)
- Staff drift in criteria:
  - Inflation (“but she wasn’t on her best behavior”)
  - Deflation (“but he tried so hard!”)
- Bootleg reinforcement (“I get my reward elsewhere”)
- Hard to withhold attention

**Ways to Brainstorm**
- Clarify the criteria for earning (e.g., more observable and countable)
- Use prompting device to catch it:
  - MotivAider
  - awakeningbell.org
- Planned extinction: remove attention/access to reward
- Improve quality of reward with ideas from Master List

**Contingency**

**Ideally:**
- Reinforcement is provided IF and ONLY IF desired target behavior occurs
Common Hack #3: Student Input!

Low Variety & Choice
- Primary function not established
- "Treasure Chest" or "Reward Bins" include tangibles and/or edibles only
- No variation of rewards over time

Ways to Get Input
- Use a preference assessment frequently for student input
- Reward Bins that include tangibles and "passes" for attention/escape (e.g., interactive activities, task passes)
- Establish multiple lists of similar function-based rewards to cycle through

Reinforcement Ideas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students who are motivated by:</th>
<th>...Might like to:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adult Attention</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer attention</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Escape from non-preferred tasks/activities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tangible items</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Assist adult in the building with task
- Help teacher prepare to present a lesson
- Take a note to the main office
- Read a story aloud to a younger student or classroom
- Select fun activity for the class from a list of choices
- Be line leader
- Homework pass to skip assignment or question
- 5 minutes computer time
- Be allowed to write/draw
- Receive snacks, candy, or drinks
- Select a prize from a prize box
- Receive a raffle ticket to enter for a prize

More Examples...

Student Survey

Reinforcement Ideas

200+ Ideas

Automated Forced-Choice Reinforcement Survey

1. Choose (or write-in) the rewards you want to assess
Automated Forced-Choice Reinforcement Survey

2. Record choices as you administer

3. Review results by function and reward immediately