Achieving Personal Outcomes

Implementing the Person-Centered Plan through Active Support

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Implementing Person-Centered Plans

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Glossary

Active Support: Providing active and continuous support to help a person be engaged in meaningful activities throughout the day regardless of functioning as needed to be involved in their own lives.

Active Treatment: Support that is intended to improve the person's ability to be more self-sufficient or independent. Assistance designed to reduce dependency and help people reach their goals.

Backward Chaining: Teaching the last step in a task first, then the next-to-last step and so on until you reach the first response in a sequence.

Behavior: Anything someone does (e.g., breathing, walking, yelling.)

Custodial Care: Taking care of needs, doing for a person with no efforts to teach.

Dip in Dip Out: A strategy in which the DSP provides support for the person to succeed with a more difficult step and then back off so that the individual does not receive more help than needed.

Discrepancy Analysis: Figuring out what skills or supports a person needs in order to be successful in a desired environment.

Ecological Inventory: Making a list of all the skills needed to be successful in a particular setting (job, leisure activity, living arrangement.)

Engaging Activities: An activity that is appealing. People want to be involved. Engaging activities are fun, interesting, something people choose to do.

Error-free Learning: The person is prevented from making a mistake because the teacher steps in before an error occurs to demonstrate the correct response.

Every Moment Has Potential: Looking around at what needs to be done and thinking "Who can I include in this activity?";recognizing opportunities to engage people in all circumstances.

Extinction: Eliminating or withholding reinforcement for a behavior until the person stops using it.

Fading: Gradual elimination of cues and assistance so that eventually the task is completed more independently.

Forward Chaining: Teach the first step in the task, then the second, and so on until the final step is reached.

Generalization: Ability to use the skill in a variety of different places with a variety of materials and people.

Gestural Prompts: Pointing at, tapping, or touching the correct choice.

Graded Assistance: Using just enough of the right kind of support; provided at the right time in the right way to help individuals succeed.

Hotel or Medical Model: An approach to providing services that focuses on providing care or support "to or for" a person rather than doing activities "with" a person. This method is not considered best practice.

Immediate Reinforcement: The reinforcement immediately follows the behavior you wish to strengthen.

Incidental learning: Learning that is unplanned. Incidental learning takes place in everyday interactions as a part of routine activities.

Intellectual Disability: Disability that impairs the person's ability to reason, solve problems, understand abstract ideas, get information, predict what will happen, generalize what is learned in a new setting or understand and unspoken agenda. This impacts the person's ability to function independently.

Intermittent Reinforcement: Some occurrences of the behavior are reinforced, others are not.

Least-to-Most Assistive Prompt: Giving the learner the least amount of assistance necessary to perform the step or task, then gradually increasing the amount of assistance if the learner is not successful. Also called graded assistance.

Little and Often: Describes how best to approach introduction of a new skill or activity.

Maximize Choice and Control: Arranging an activity and the supports provided in ways that are aligned with a person's individual preferences and which build in numerous opportunities for choice and control.

Massed Practice: Repeated practice of the same skill in a teaching session. Spaced practice is considered a better way to teach than massed practice.

Modeling: Demonstrating a particular step and then waiting for the learner to imitate the behavior.

Natural Cues: Signals which occur naturally in the setting (i.e. a laundry buzzer, an empty supply bin.)

Natural Supports: The kind of support that members of a community provide to each other (i.e., the kind of support a coworker provides to a new employee.)

Over Cueing: Giving unnecessary prompts, includes explaining too much.

Person-Centered Planning (PCP): A broad term that describes planning that focuses on the person's gifts, abilities, choices, and dreams. Person-centered planning addresses all areas of the individual's life and seeks to bridge the gap between where the person is now and where they would prefer to be if they had the support needed for meaningful participation.

Personal Outcomes: Personal Outcomes are what people expect from the services and supports they receive.

Physical Prompt: Hands-on assistance.

Prompts: Brief instructions to help the learner know what s/he is supposed to do or how to do a task.

Punishment: The definition of punishment has three parts: a) after the person has completed the target behavior; b) a consequence for the behavior is provided; c) there is a weakening of the behavior (the behavior is less likely to occur.)

Reinforcement: The definition of reinforcement has three parts: a) the behavior occurs; b) a consequence is provided after the behavior occurs; c) the behavior is strengthened (more likely to occur again.)

Rehearsal Strategy: A method for remembering new facts. Writing it down or repeating it out loud a few times are two examples.

Satiated: State of being full or satisfied. No desire for more.

Selective Reinforcement: Specifically reinforcing the behavior you wish to strengthen, while at the same time you avoid reinforcing inappropriate behaviors.

Shaping: Teaching a series of small changes in behavior so it becomes more and more like the desired skill; reinforcement is only given if the skill being practiced is more like the desired skill than the last practice of the behavior.

Spaced Practice: Opportunities for learning are spaced throughout the day or week.

Systematic Instruction: Consistent step-by-step procedures. Consistent prompts, materials, and settings to help the learner know what to expect.

Task Analysis: Breaking a task into a sequence of steps that, when completed, will enable the person to perform the whole task from beginning to end (i.e. making popcorn – what are the steps from purchase to eating?).

Unlearned Reinforcers: Those reinforcers which we are born with, which strengthen behavior without prior learning experiences (i.e., food when we are hungry.)

Lesson 1: Introduction to Achieving Goals

OBJECTIVES:

- Explain the concept of "Personal Outcomes" and why they are important in providing support to people with disabilities.
- Describe how to determine an individual's Personal Outcomes.
- Tell what staff must know about each person in order to provide effective supports.
- Explain the purpose of person-centered planning.
- Explain the purpose of person-centered active support.

Personal Outcomes*

Personal means specific to one person. **Outcomes** refer to results**. Personal Outcomes refer to what people expect to get from the services and supports provided**. Personal Outcomes include goals common to lots of people, yet focus on the specific issues important to that person. There isn't one definition that applies to all people. In fact, it is unlikely two people would describe their Personal Outcomes in exactly the same way.

Sometimes it's possible to discover Personal Outcomes by talking with a person. Or, you can watch what they do and how they look and act during daily activities. The agency's self-assessment process helps the support team get to know the person and his/her unique goals.

We know that one size doesn't fit all when it comes to helping dreams come true. Quality programs learn how each person expresses choices and takes steps to respond. Effective staff take time to figure out how each person learns best and what:

- is important to him/her
- he or she enjoys (and hates)
- skills or attributes he/she has
- excites, scares, or motivates him/her

All North Dakota Developmental Disability (DD) service providers are required to be accredited by The Council on Quality and Leadership in Supports for People with Disabilities (The Council.) The Council uses Personal Outcome Measures to accredit agencies. The Council evaluates the quality by the agency's efforts to help people reach their "Personal Outcomes." See the entire list of **Personal Outcome Measures** in Appendix C.

Person-Centered Planning and Personal Outcomes

Person-Centered Planning (PCP) describes a process that focuses on a person's gifts, abilities, choices, and dreams. PCP addresses all areas of the individual's life. The goal of PCP is to bridge the gap between where a person is now, where they want to be, and to consider what it would

take for the person to experience a meaningful life. Working on skills that a person has not yet acquired to bridge the gap without helping the person create a meaningful life hear and now is not the goal. PCP includes friends and family members, and others who care about the person as part of the planning team. This team identifies opportunities for the person to:

- make friends and have intimate relationships
- participate in the community
- increase control over his or her life
- participate actively in his/her daily routine
- identify interests and dreams
- develop supports and skills needed to achieve goals
- live, work, and play in the most integrated, least restrictive environment (place)
- be meaningfully engaged in activities.

In order for PCP to make a difference, the process can't end with the planning. The members on the PCP team must use what they learn to provide **Active Support.** The information gained during PCP is used to select ways to overcome barriers that are keeping the person from reaching his/her goals (Mercer, 2003.) and to be engaged in their own life through a variety of planned and unplanned activities that are meaningful to the person.

Sue's PCP team discovered that she was feeling lonesome living in her apartment for the first time, even with a roommate. The team wrote a plan for Sue to work on communication skills and identifying fun activities to do with her leisure time. That was fine but it did not result in Sue receiving Active Support. Instead, the team and Sue went through and created an individualized schedule for Sue that was designed to reduce loneliness by increasing opportunities for social engagement at home and in the community. Each time period during the day specified opportunities and strategies for providing social support to Sue. The team began to teach Sue how to live a less lonely life. Some of these items included:

a. Teaching Sue to use a check in process at the beginning and ending of the day by touching base with her roommate, staff and family using phone, Facebook and conversations.

b. Helping Sue identify persons without disabilities that she could get to know in a variety of community settings that she enjoyed and showing her how to chat and show interest and support in these people. Skills included greeting people without interrupting, volunteering good news, asking after their interests and families and sharing meaningful events (What she did for Thanksgiving).

c. Helping Sue identify four weekly activities that she could do alone but would now plan to do with other people for fun and social interactions.

Things to Do with Roomate	Things to Do with Family	Things to Do with Friends
- Cook a meal together - Watch a movie together - Decorate the house together - Play a game together	- Visit a relative - Cook a meal together - Shop together - Watch a movie together	- Have a movie night - Eat out together - Volunteer at an event - Go to a play or concert

These actions on the part of staff took Sue beyond working on communication skills and choice making to building a life worth living. That is what Active Support is all about.

During PCP a picture of the person's future is created. With the help of the team, the person makes choices about where to live, work and have fun. For example, the team might discover that Bruce wants a job working outdoors. He wants an apartment to share with a roommate. Bruce also likes to play pool at least once a week and wants to go fishing every summer with his brothers.

The team **makes a list of what is needed for the person to be successful** in the life they desire. This list is called an ecological inventory. Next, the elements required to do these things are compared to his/her current abilities and supports. The list of missing skills and supports is called discrepancy analysis. The skills, supports, or services **that the person doesn't currently have** are used to decide what to work on next. (See the *Assessment and Setting Goals* module for more information on the assessment process.)

The major questions this module will address include:

1. What are the ways to help people reach Personal Outcomes?
2. How does the team decide the best way to help (fastest and most efficient). Of course, only options which promote dignity, human rights, and inclusion (being with other people) will be considered.
3. What kinds of support will the person need throughout the day to be engaged meaningfully in their own life?

Two Basic Assumptions

Before going further, it's important to clearly identify two assumptions basic to helping people reach their goals.

Assumption #1
The team assumes that the person's ability to achieve his or her Personal Outcomes depends on our (the service system's) ability to provide the needed supports and services.

This belief will have a huge effect on how you assist people. Read the statements below:

Sue ran away so often, she had to be moved back to the group home.

Jim bothered his fellow workers so often, he was fired. He had to go back to the day program.

Both of these statements imply that the person "failed" in some way. It is true that if Sue hadn't run away so often, she would still be living in

the foster home. If Jim hadn't bothered other employees, he would still have his job. However, the more important points are:

- *Why did Sue run away? Why didn't she receive support such as a teaching program, or supervision to limit chances to run away?*

- *Why did Jim bother other employees? Why wasn't support provided to help Jim learn the social skills he needed to keep his job?*

Staff involved in their programs might say:

We did try a teaching program, but it didn't work.

We were not able to get more staff to keep Jim from bothering others.

The staff might feel that they really did try, yet the person failed. Suppose, however, they had been able to develop better teaching plans. Suppose more staff helped supervise and support. Is it possible that Sue's running away would have decreased? Could Jim have developed the social skills he needed? **Of course!** Sometimes it is not possible to provide all the support a person needs to succeed. If this is the case, it is important for agencies to share in the responsibility for failure and not put in all the responsibility on the person. An agency should learn from these experiences to continuously improve services.

Assumption #2
Assume that all personal outcomes can be achieved in ways that respect the person's legal rights and human dignity.

In the past, people with disabilities were grouped together in large state institutions. They were kept away from people who didn't have disabilities. People said that this treatment was "necessary to meet their needs." People were not allowed to "learn how to behave better" in their own communities. Such logic is no longer believed, and never should have been allowed.

Lesson 1: Feedback Exercise

1. When a person "fails" it is possible to see how different _____ and _____ might have prevented the failure.

2. _____ _____ refer to what people with disabilities expect from the services and supports they receive.

3. Why is it important for the team to believe that a person's ability to achieve his or her Personal Outcomes depends on our (the service system's) ability to provide the needed supports and services?

4. What key information about each person is needed to provide effective supports?

5. Teams should assume that all personal outcomes can be achieved in ways that respect the person's _____ and _____.

6. How do we find out the Personal Outcomes that are important to each individual?

7. What is the purpose of Person-Centered Planning?

8. What is Active Support and How does it build on PCP?

9. Read the following examples of "failure." In the space provided after each example, write down changes the service system might have made to prevent the failure. Discuss your answers with your trainer.

    A. Maria lives with a foster family. She's twelve years old and has no obvious physical disabilities. Although she's generally well behaved during the day, at night she wakes up frequently and roams through the house. The Clarks, her foster parents, tried to control this but without success. Because of the damage she does on "night trips," the Clarks have asked that Maria be moved back to the group home.
    Potential changes:

    B. Bill is about to be fired. He has been working at a local garage for about one month. His employer is happy with the quality of Bill's work. The problem is that Bill is late to work almost every day. Some days he misses his bus; other days he forgets to get off at the right stop; and sometimes he simply sleeps late.
    Potential changes:

    C. Bud, age 22, won't be able to leave the nursing home. He and his friend, Tom, want to share an apartment. That won't be possible right now because of the challenges Bud faces. Tom's apartment is on the second floor and Bud has to use a wheelchair to get around. His cerebral palsy makes it impossible for him to dress, bathe, or eat by himself. His mother, who is also his guardian, is firmly opposed to his leaving the nursing home.
    Potential changes:

Lesson 2: Selecting Strategies

OBJECTIVES:

- Name the most frequently named barrier to a person achieving his or her goals.
- Describe the support strategy most often selected when the person's behavior is described as the barrier to attaining a goal.
- Explain how focusing on functions increases the number of ways to achieve a goal.
- Describe and give examples of at least four kinds of supportive services.

Introduction

> *"Jim can't move to the apartment yet -- he hasn't learned how to cook or take care of his clothes."*
>
> *"Leah is almost ready to leave the day program and take the job at the factory. As soon as we can decrease how often she asks for help that she really doesn't need, she'll be ready to move."*
>
> *"Our objective has been to teach Michael to eat with a spoon. However, because of his cerebral palsy (CP), it has been very difficult. He often drops the spoon or turns it over. I guess we will have to work with him more each day."*

In each of these examples, a goal was described, and a barrier to the goal was identified. In each of the cases, the barrier described was the **behavior** of the person. Jim can't move to an apartment because he **doesn't know how to cook and take care of his clothes**. Leah can't take a job at the plant because **she asks for help she doesn't need**. In other words, the "failure" is described as being the person's fault. Since the goals apparently cannot be achieved because of the person's current behavior, then it seems logical to try to **change that behavior.**

In Jim's situation, the plan will be to teach him to cook and do the laundry by himself. As soon as Leah learns to stay on task and not bother the supervisor, she will be able to get the job she really wants. The plan for Michael will be to teach him how to eat with a spoon.

Often these strategies are successful. The person's behavior changes and the goal is met. However, many times the strategies fail. The person's behavior doesn't change enough, and the goal is not met. Frequently, if the goal is met, it is only after months or years of teaching and practicing. Meanwhile, the person is often miserable.

Think about what this slow, tedious process means for people with intellectual disabilities/ developmental disabilities (ID/DD). Think about someone with cerebral palsy who has very little control over his/her arms and legs. Imagine what it is like for someone with more than one

disability who is trying to learn even a simple task. Saying a person with ID/DD must **learn something before** s/he can move to a more desired living arrangement, get a job, or participate in a fun activity, **is actually making them remain exactly where they are** -- if not indefinitely, at least for a very long time.

This lesson outlines another way to achieve goals, another way of bridging the gap between what now exists and what the person wants. First, let's review the difference between what needs to be done (function) and the ways something can be done (forms.) There's a big difference between these two statements:

Jim must learn how to cook his meals before he can move from the group home to the apartment he wants to share with Brad.

Meals must be available if Jim is to move from the group home and share an apartment with Brad.

The first statement assumes that Jim must learn a type or **form** of behavior (cooking) before he can move. The second statement is more accurate. It points out the necessary function: **meals must be available to Jim.**

Stating the problem in terms of the function(s) increases the number of possible solutions and points the way to providing Active Support. It also points out that Jim doesn't need to learn how to cook. Look at the table below:

Barrier or Obstacle (function)	**Potential Solutions** (forms)
Meals must be available if Jim is to move from the group home to an apartment with Brad.	1. Brad prepares all the meals. 2. Jim eats in restaurants. 3. Part-time staff prepare meals. 4. "Meals-on-Wheels" delivers meals. 5. Jim is supported to be engaged in meal planning and preparation to the extent possible when appropriate.

Each potential solution gets rid of the barrier without requiring a change in Jim's behavior. If "meal availability" were the only barrier to Jim's moving-- the only major gap between what **functions** must be achieved and what Jim can currently do -- then the move could take place as soon as one of the four solutions was in place.

What if it were not possible to do any of the potential solutions? Suppose Brad can't cook either; it costs too much to eat in restaurants; there is no part-time staff available; and the local Meals-on-Wheels program is limited to older citizens. If it is not possible to provide necessary supports or services, Jim may have to prepare meals. However, it is important to think creatively about all the possible ways Jim could prepare meals. If we say, "Jim must learn to cook," most people would think he needs to learn how to buy, store, measure, and prepare a wide variety of foods. That might take a very long time if Jim has ID/DD or other complex disabilities.

However, if we ask ourselves, what are all the possible ways (forms) that Jim might prepare meals (function), the number of **solutions increase.** For example, Jim might:

a.   eat only those foods which don't have to be cooked, e.g., sandwiches, fruit, cereal, etc.
b.   learn to heat canned foods
c.   eat a steady diet of frozen foods

You might not think that the above choices are very appealing. However, if using one of those methods (forms) meant that you could live in your own apartment (Personal Outcome) instead of a group home, they might look better -- especially to Jim.

This approach would not mean that Jim would never learn to cook. After Jim moved to the apartment, he could be taught to cook. It would decrease costs to the system (no need for part-time help), and Jim would be able to depend less on others. A plan to teach Jim to cook is probably a good idea for Jim. What would be wrong, however, would be to say Jim must learn how to cook **before** he can live with Brad. What would be equally wrong would be to say that Jim does not need to learn to cook before he can live with Brad and then to take no reasonable action to help him move in with Brad.

Guidelines for Supportive Services

Supports can be categorized in many ways. Thinking about the following types of support can be helpful for assisting people to reach personal outcomes:

a.   Natural supports in the community
b.   Staff support and supervision
c.   physical adaptations (changes) to furniture, architecture, or equipment
d.   assistive devices that are specifically designed to meet a particular individual's needs

Support and Supervision

This type of support refers to people who assist the individual with a disability. It covers a wide range of possibilities. It could refer to part-time staff who meet periodically with the individual to provide assistance with tasks such as shopping and paying bills. It could mean a full-time

attendant for a person with severe physical disabilities. It could mean a neighbor who helps with snow shoveling or yardwork.

Physical Adaptations to Furniture, Architecture, and Equipment

People with physical disabilities often require support in the form of adapted equipment or architecture. More and more buildings have ramps, adapted bathrooms, and other modifications. Builders are becoming experienced in making homes accessible for wheelchairs. Federal law now requires that all new buses have special lifts to accommodate travelers with physical disabilities.

Most major industries have become so automated that it is usually possible to adapt machinery so a worker with physical disabilities can operate it at the required speed. Special adaptations, or "jigs," can make smaller pieces of equipment such as table saws and drills available for operation by persons who cannot see, measure length, or line up holes.

Active Support: This kind of support would help to engage someone immediately in building a life worth living and achieving personal outcomes now, not someday in the future. The team would consider specific actions that might be taken to engage the person in transitioning to a new lifestyle and in realizing opportunities to live their own life rather than having services automatically done for them just because it has always been done that way. Think about the example with Brad and Jim. The team could help Brad and Jim take a look at Jim's apartment and see if it has enough bedroom space, where Brad would put his things, what items should they share or each own, how will they pay for the rent. The team could also help Brad to make a list of all the steps that needed to be completed to move in with Jim and check his progress in getting support to take those steps every day until the move-in date arrives. This kind of Active Support shows Brad that he is not just being humored. His Personal Outcomes are taken seriously and he is getting the support he needs to make them a reality.

Specially Designed Equipment and Devices

Barriers can sometimes be overcome by using assistive devices. For example, people with hearing impairments are able to "hear" the doorbell or telephone via a flashing light. People who were once denied employment because they were unable to speak clearly, now use computerized speech devices at work. Assistive technology can be "high tech" or "low tech". The communication device in the earlier example is an example of a high tech device. Using a rubber jar opener is an example of a low tech device. If someone says, "It can't be done" or "She'll never be able to do that..." a special device of some kind might be the answer.

Least Dependent Alternative

When selecting supportive services and assistive technology, it is important to find the strategy that will assist the person to "blend" into the setting as much as possible. Being accepted and included frequently depends on how much a person is thought to be just like everyone else. For example, when selecting a watch with an alarm to help the person remember medication times, pick a watch that meets the support needs, but looks like the watches that everyone else wears. Questions to ask when selecting a support include:

- If a physical adaptation or specially designed device is going to be used, is it possible to use familiar materials that are readily available rather than specialized, highly technical equipment?

- If help is going to be needed to complete the activity, are there people that could give the assistance rather than paid staff? For example, could the person learn to ask the waitress for help when ordering a meal or use a communication board to tell the bank staff what he needs? Could a coworker remind Bill that Tuesday is the day to turn in his time card?

Summary

The major purpose of any human service agency is to help people with disabilities achieve their personal outcomes. Learning the skills they need to be successful is just one strategy. When finding ways to support a person to reach their goals quickly and efficiently:

- First, consider the barriers to goals in terms of the **functions** that must be met.
- Next, consider supports and services that could satisfy the function **without requiring a major change in the person's behavior.**
- Then create a plan to put the supports and services in place immediately.
- If, after considering all of the available resources, the goal is still not achievable, **develop a teaching plan to help the person reach the goal.**

Remember, it may still be advisable to develop a teaching program when a goal has been met with supports and services. If the person can learn to perform necessary skills, he or she will gain more independence and be seen as a more typical community member.

Lesson 2: Feedback Exercise

1. Explain why we avoid saying, "Before this person can ....., he must learn....." when working with people with disabilities?

2. If a person can be taught to perform many of the necessary functions, he or she will _____ _____ and be seen as a _____ _____ _____ _____.

3. In order to help people achieve their goals faster, _____ _____ are sometimes provided to compensate for skills the person isn't yet able to perform.

4. Support services can be provided through:

   a. _____ who assist the person
   b. _____ to furniture, architecture, and equipment
   c. Specially designed _____
   d. _____ _____

5. It is (usually/rarely) advisable to develop a teaching plan when a goal is being met with supports and services.

6. Why does the module suggest we use familiar materials that are readily available rather than specialized, highly technical equipment when a physical adaptation or specially designed device is going to be used?

7. If the assistance needed by a worker with a disability can be provided easily by a coworker, it will draw (less/more) attention to the worker's disability than a job coach.

8. List some potential solutions (forms) for each of the following problems (functions).

   a. Getting to work

   b. Paying bills

   c. Communicating

Lesson 3: Intellectual Disabilities and Learning

OBJECTIVES:

- List goals that people with disabilities have in common with people who do not have disabilities.
- Explain differences in how people with intellectual disabilities learn new information when compared to people who do not have intellectual disabilities.
- Explain the difference between active treatment and custodial care.
- Explain the difference between active treatment and active support
- Explain the difference between helping and teaching.
- Describe how staff can support learning for people with intellectual disabilities.

Similarities and Differences

The services agencies provide are based on respect for the rights, dignity and worth of people of all abilities. We believe that **all people have value**. Teams use PCP to create supports that meet the **unique needs of each person and actively engage them in meaningful activities regardless of their support needs**. Our services are based on the belief that **everyone, no matter what their abilities, shares common goals** including the desire to:

- live where they want
- work at a job they enjoy
- share their lives with people they care about and who care about them
- enjoy basic human rights
- Be respected and treated fairly
- Be engaged in their own lives

Over the last 50 years it has been proven that **all people can learn**. But, people with intellectual disabilities often need support to get information, make sense of that information and be motivated to stay engaged in activities. In fact, having an intellectual disability that impacts learning and adaptive behavior and **the intensity of support needs are key factor used to decide if people qualify for services**.

Marc Gold, a famous researcher, said that people with ID require better teachers. In other words, **whether or not a person learns depends on the ability of the teacher(s) and the availability of support.**

Helping vs Teaching

Give a person a fish and you will feed him for a day; help him learn to fish and you may feed him for a lifetime.

Chinese Proverb

No matter what your position at the agency, helping people is not enough. The primary purpose of your support should be to support people to succeed in being engaged in their own lives and to prepare people for the future. "Doing things for people" or "giving them something" (answers, advice, help, or things), is not helping them become more capable in the future or more engaged in a meaningful life in the here and now.

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid (CMS) is the funding agency that pays for most services to people with ID. Beginning in the 1980s, CMS said that it would no longer pay for care they called "custodial". Custodial care is assistance **NOT** intended to help the person become more independent (McMorrow, 2003.) CMS now requires "**active treatment**", the process of helping a person become more independent or self-reliant. The state of North Dakota requires people to also receive active support. This chart illustrates the difference between custodial care active treatment and active support.

Custodial Care	Active Treatment	Active Support
Giving people fish	Helping a person learn how to • fish • shop for groceries • grow a vegetable garden.	Going fishing together and enjoying the days catch, along with fresh vegetables from the garden and soda-pop using paper plates, napkins and plastic silverware from the store.
Preparing meals	Helping a person learn how to • cook • order from a menu • open a can of beans.	Going camping together and engaging the person to cook hot dogs, beans and chips before enjoying s'mores in the great outdoors.
Tying the person's shoes	Helping a person learn how to • tie their own shoes • buy slip on shoes.	Getting dressed up to go down town together or impress a date.
Watching TV together	Helping a person learn how to invite a friend to do something fun together.	Pick out and watch a great movie together and talking about it over pizza.

Turning on lights, fan, radio, etc.	Helping a person learn how to do it themselves. Finding assistive technology, adaptive switches, and environmental controls.	Supporting someone to create a cozy atmosphere or bright work area for a new project.
Using language that refers to actions done to objects rather than people. For example: • loading the van • feeding • toileting	Using language that shows respect. Words that describe assistance that supports the person to do as much as they can. Examples include: • helping a person get on the van • assisting the person to eat • assisting with personal care	Actively talking with the person about what he or she and you are doing. Taking turns and helping the person associate words with actions.

That does not mean that you will never do things for a person. There are times when it is very important to "do for" a person. In an emergency, staff may have to provide more assistance than teaching. When a person has very complex needs, the team may decide that there are certain skills that aren't as important right now. The team will often recommend that these activities be done for a person for now, because he or she is learning other, higher priority skills. But, the main idea is that **over all, the goal of the services is to improve the person's ability to do as much as they can for themselves and how to reduce learned helplessness by supporting the person to be as engaged in meaningful activities in some way or form throughout the day.**

> **Jack and Martin both have intellectual disabilities and limited hand and arm movements. They are not physically able to wash the dishes. They both use wheelchairs. Instead of just doing the dishes for them, the support staff engage them at a meaningful level. After each meal a towel is place on the wheelchair tray. Each person is given a shallow, clear pan with soapy water that is placed on the towel. He is assisted to swish a variety of objects in the water using the movement he does have before those items are placed in the dishwasher. Jack and Martin are getting Active Support to be as engaged as possible in their own lives. They are not treated as if they were living in a hotel and merely cared for. Active support not only increases engagement but works to decrease learned helplessness and depression.**

Your Role as Mentor and Teacher

Think about how many decisions, problems, and activities most adults face every day. Life can be challenging for people who have great difficulty getting information, moving and making sense of information. Because people with ID have so much to learn, the importance of being a good teacher cannot be overstated. We want them to be able to experience the benefits (i.e., jobs, money, home, families, and fun activities) that come to those who are able to do things well. **Good teaching means a systematic (planned, organized, consistent) approach to helping people learn.**

In a human service agency, everyone who comes in contact with the people receiving supports has an opportunity to engage that person in learning. However, because direct support workers spend so much time with consumers, they have the **most** opportunities to help people learn. Supervisors, QDDPs, and consultants with the assistance from the DSP or people with work closely with the person may write the formal teaching plans. However, the **staff who deliver the instruction through Active Support on a day-to-day basis are direct support professionals.**

Learning, Thinking and Problem Solving Abilities

Research has identified several traits that are common to many people who have intellectual disabilities. In this lesson, we will describe these traits and compare them to the way that typical adults (those who don't have a disability) get and make sense of information and stay motivated. We will also give tips for how to use this information to assist people with ID to learn. These tips apply to formal teaching plans as well as everyday (incidental) learning. We will ask you to put yourself in the position of learning with similar challenges. You will never know exactly what it is like to have an intellectual disability but you can come to understand the unique way these learners approach life and be better prepared to provide support and discover the teachable moment.

Intellectual disabilities, like all disabilities, includes a range of abilities. Some of the traits and descriptions won't apply for some of the people you support. Other people might respond exactly as described in this chapter. Your job is to provide the amount and kind of support that matches each person's needs and preferences. That's a big responsibility.

Providing the correct supports for each person is easier when staff share information with each other. If you find a strategy that works with one of the people you support, tell your coworkers.

Marilyn had a tendency to blurt out comments in a very loud voice on a continuous basis. This tended to annoy her housemates. Staff encouraged her to talk quietly or take turns in talking but that was not working very well. Then one day, Martin suggested that Marilyn "use her inside voice," a phrase he had often heard used at a school where he also worked part time. To his surprise, Marilyn immediately quieted down and he was able to reinforce her for speaking quietly. The phrase "why not use your inside voice" was more familiar and had more meaning for Marilyn. Martin told his co-workers about the new approach and everyone quickly switched to make the same suggestion in a positive tone. That same approach might not work for another individual but it worked for Marilyn. Over time, staff were able to reinforce Marilyn for talking quietly and gradually phased out the "use your inside voice," phrase, replacing it with a gestural cue that drew less attention to Marilyn. Martin's **shared** observations pointed the way to a more successful approach.

If you are struggling to find a way to help someone understand and nothing seems to work, ask the rest of the team, the QDDP, or your staff trainer. **People who have a great deal to learn, require good teachers.** They don't have time to waste on methods that won't help them learn. It's also much more rewarding and motivating for staff to see progress and watch people reach goals. Help the consumers, your coworkers, and yourself be successful by using the best teaching methods for each person. (Note: Staff should only share information with people who work directly with the person. Staff who are not a part of the person's life, do not have a need to know.)

The rest of this lesson will be organized around learning traits. Next to each "typical learning, thinking, and problem solving ability", will be a description that explains differences for adults with ID. Each comparison will be followed by methods staff can use to help people with ID compensate (make up for) this learning challenge. Finally, some examples are given to show how to use these methods to help people learn.

ABSTRACT vs CONCRETE (can see or touch) THINKING	
Typical Adult	**Many Adults with ID**
Capable of abstract thinking. Can think & talk about something that is not present in the here and now. (A person with this ability could talk about apples without the apple being present.) Has a good sense of past, present, and future.	Abstract thought is very difficult. Often requires concrete examples (actual objects) to understand. (May have trouble understanding "apple" if it weren't physically present.) Poor sense of past, present, & future.

Strategies that Help People Learn

It is more difficult for people with ID to think about things that aren't actually present or visible. Therefore, they often learn better **in the actual setting where the skill needs to occur using the actual materials.** People who have difficulty with abstract thinking also struggle with concepts of time. Yesterday, tomorrow, and next week, may be beyond their understanding.

Examples:

- If you are going to help Diane learn about healthy food choices, you may need to have the food items present to convey the message accurately. That means that the best time to help her learn about healthy food choices is at mealtime, snack time, or when shopping.
- If Brad will need to change the dressing on a wound, merely telling him what to do probably won't be enough instruction. He will need to practice changing the dressing using all the same supplies that he will be expected to use later.
- Calendars, planners, or some other concrete system may be necessary to help people understand that something is going to happen tomorrow, next week, or next month.

INTEGRATION OF INFORMATION	
Typical Adult	**Many Adults with ID**
Able to integrate (bring together) many separate skills (fine and gross motor, communication, math, writing) all at the same time. (Example: driving a car.)	May not be able to integrate (combine) separate skills. May need more repetition and elimination of unnecessary steps.

Strategies That Help People Learn

It is important to help people learn functional skills the way they will actually be used and to get the kind of support they prefer. Practicing saying "la, la, la, la" during speech therapy isn't the best way to help someone learn to ask, "Where's the "lavatory?" Instead, help them learn to use a card that says, "Where's the bathroom?" Practicing putting pegs in a peg board, will improve how well the person can put pegs in a peg board. However, it doesn't help someone learn how to quickly assemble parts for a factory. It would be much better for the person to learn the assembly task in the factory, using the real materials. People need to learn how to perform a task or activity in the setting where they will use the skill using actual materials.

Examples:

- Teaching Sharleen banking with play money in a classroom is not likely to be successful. In order for her to learn how to use the bank, she needs to go to the bank and make a deposit or cash a check.
- Learning about street safety has to take place at the intersection(s) the person uses regularly. Practicing this skill in a classroom, will not insure that the person learns the skill at busy intersections.

- If Dixie wants to become a maid, she needs to learn the job by cleaning rooms in the motel where she wants to work. By learning the skill on the job, she will use the same supplies that the hotel buys, and learn the steps the maids are required to follow. Cleaning bathrooms in a day program, will not prepare Dixie to become a hotel maid.
- Communication skills (i.e., sign language, communication boards, or speaking) must be practiced in normal conversation, during regular routines, and with people who the person normally encounters. Special training sessions in isolated settings are not as effective.

ATTENTION SPAN & DISCRIMINATION SKILLS	
Typical Adult	**Many Adults with ID**
Good attention span and discrimination (ability to identify differences) skills.	Hard time paying attention. May only be able to remember the first or last thing said. Only able to think about one thought at a time. May not be able to focus on what you think until you have first acknowledged what they think.

Strategies That Help People Learn

People with ID may have trouble figuring out what is important. If too much information is provided at one time, it is difficult for them to learn. Distractions (sounds, sights, people, smells, lighting, and our flow of words etc.) make it hard for the person to pay attention to the key parts of the task or conversation. Many times it isn't really that the person can't pay attention, it's that he or she pays attention to unimportant details (Wheeler, 1999.)
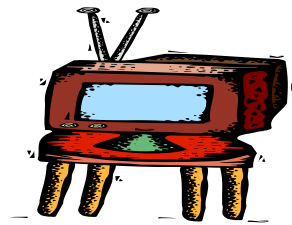
When helping people learn a new or complex task, it is important to control things that interfere with learning. Turn off the TV or radio, move to a spot where there are less people, clear the area of extra tools or materials, and close the door if necessary. **Make sure that the person is looking at the task** instead of looking at you. To accomplish this, you will need to look at the task yourself and perhaps point or tell the person where to look. Wait until the person is looking at the task before beginning to teach. During a conversation, you would use a similar procedure only wait until the person is looking at you before starting to speak.

Teachers need to **help the person understand why they are being asked to do something** (i.e., "Point the knife down so you don't get cut.") **Point out the important parts of a task and differences that help a person remember** (i.e., "see the shiny, square button.") Don't assume that they will make that connection by themselves.

Sometimes, the person only has room in their mind for one thought at a time. **Staff need to remember to give only one thought at a time.** If you keep talking, they may not hear or they may only hear the last thing you say. If you say, "Don't run," all they might hear is "run." Saying" Step out," may be clearer than saying "Do you want to get out of the van now?"

Examples:

- Show Gwen the important features of the bus stop (the shelter, the store near the bus stop, and the bench) where she will wait for her ride after work. Then ask her to show you how she will know she is at the correct bus stop.

- When showing Beth how to use the photocopy machine, point out the unique features of each button on the keypad so that she can remember the important parts of the task and materials involved. Show her what happens when the buttons are pushed correctly and what happens if mistakes are made.
- When helping Marva learn how to do laundry, explain why it is important to separate the light from dark by showing her a white shirt that has fading from a dark colored garment. While practicing putting light items in one pile and darks in another, provide information as to why each article goes in either the light or dark pile. Use the same words each time, "Yes, that is 'light'," etc.
- Keep instructions brief (as few words as possible) and **focus on what you want the person to do, instead of what you don't want the person to do**. For example, say, "Please walk." instead of, "Don't run."

MEMORY	
Typical Adult	**Many Adults with ID**
Good long-term (things that happened more than a few minutes ago) and short-term (immediate) memory.	Long-term memory functions much the same as it does for most people. However, difficulty with short-term memory (new information.) As a result, less information gets stored in long-term memory.

Strategies That Help People Learn

Because it is harder for a person with ID to store new information, **keep the time between learning sessions short**. If you wait too long, the person may not remember what they learned. When it is important for new information to be stored in long-term memory, **new skills have to be practiced frequently** (at least daily.) If a new skill is practiced less often, the person may never learn. If they do learn, it will take much longer.

When asked a question, people with ID **may not be able to recall the answer, but they might be able to recognize the right answer.** A better strategy is to **help them choose the answer from a list** you give. For example, if Teri can't answer the question, "Who was there?" ask her, "Was Bonnie, Ruth, or Val, there?" Better yet, if you show pictures of all three women or actually have them physically present, she could say the person's name or point. **If the person can't answer an open-ended question, provide a list.**

Examples:

- If Ron wants to learn to cook, start with something that he likes to eat often (i.e., toast, soup, hamburgers, macaroni and cheese, or grilled cheese sandwiches) so there are repeated chances to practice.

- Help people learn communication skills throughout the day whenever there is an opportunity to use the skill. Everyone who has contact with the person should know the teaching plan and use it frequently.
- Job developers assisting a person with limited short-term memory may want to look for jobs that involve tasks that are repeated throughout the day/week. When the person secures employment, teach one task through repeated practice until it is a part of the person's long-term memory before adding new tasks.
- When offering choices, give a list if needed. For example, there may be no response to "What do you want for snack?" It might work better to show two snacks and ask, "Do you want the apple or orange?"

INFORMATION ORGANIZATION	
Typical Adult	**Many Adults with ID**
Organizes information as it is received. Practices or rehearses if he or she thinks the information may be needed later.	Don't organize new information into what they already know, especially if they have to rearrange or relearn something. They may not practice without being prompted to do so. Some may view anything new as "difficult" and need reassurance to learn new activities. Others may not know how to organize information and not have a way to access it later.

Strategies That Help People Learn

People with ID need help organizing new information to help them remember. Teachers can help by **breaking tasks into smaller steps**. In a later chapter, you will learn more about using **task analysis**, or step-by-step lists, to help people learn complex tasks. The number of steps in a task analysis, depends on the task and the learning needs of the person being taught. Some people might need five steps for making the bed; another person might need 15 steps for the same task. **All staff should be consistent in how they use the list of steps**. "Consistency" in methods used to help people learn means that everyone uses the same words, the same steps, in the same order, with the same materials.

In addition to organizing learning tasks, people with ID need support with **rehearsal strategies**. A rehearsal strategy is a method for remembering new facts. When someone tells you a phone number, how do you remember it? Some people might write it down, others repeat it out loud a few times, and still others might say it to themselves over and over until they are sure they will remember. People with ID don't use these strategies. As a support staff you can **assist the person to learn simple remembering strategies and when to use the strategies.**

Examples:

- Gwen is learning how to clean the dog runs at the kennel where she works. The staff person made a task analysis (step-by-step) list of how the owner wants this task completed. Gwen practices this routine every day as soon as she comes to work.
- Marilyn's support staff helped her buy a little notebook and taught her to ask people to write important information down.
- Liz uses pictures on a calendar to mark important dates to remember.
- Karen has a picture schedule of tasks that need to be done at work arranged in order. As she finishes each task, she turns the picture over.
- Mary Beth is learning to practice what she is going to do and say in difficult situations. For example, Mike knows that she gets very anxious in the grocery store if she isn't able to find everything on her picture list. He is helping her learn to look for the grocery item twice and then to ask for help. If she isn't able to find an item, Mike reminds her to say to herself, "Try again, then ask for help."

PROBLEM SOLVING	
Typical Adult	**Many Adults with ID**
Uses what they have learned in the past to solve problems.	May not even realize there is a problem or be able to identify the cause. Solving problems is hard. Cannot recall information needed for solving problems or be able to think of different options.

Strategies That Help People Learn
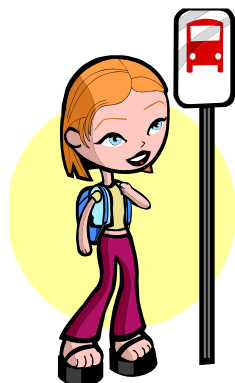
People with ID have trouble with problem solving because of some of the traits that were discussed earlier. It is hard to problem solve without being able to think about things that aren't physically present (poor abstract thinking ability.) Difficulties with short term memory and discrimination (figuring out what is important) also make it harder to solve problems. For example, Pam knows which bus stop is hers, but for some reason she missed it today. Now she no longer has all the landmarks that helped her know it is time to get off the bus. If for some reason she gets off the bus in an unfamiliar area, she may not be able to determine who to ask for help.

Problem solving is a skill that is learned. **Therefore, the most important thing that staff can do is give people chances to practice making decisions and solving different kinds of problems.** Staff don't need to do all the thinking for the people they support. Wait a bit to see if the person will figure out what to do before telling them what to do.

In each activity, think about how you might maximize choice and control for a person. For example: Suppose a person needs physical assistance to transfer from a wheelchair to a bed. Do you just pick them up and place them on or pivot them to the bed? What if you paused first and asked the person if they were ready, giving them an opportunity to communicate with a nod, gesture, sound or movement. You would be bringing the principles of Active Support into this opportunity and helping the person learn that they have control and choice in a situation.

Use a step-by-step approach to problem solving. Help people learn by rote (repeating the same steps over and over in the same sequence.) Instead of telling the person what to do, help them figure out the answers to a problem situation. When you offer solutions, offer real choices. Ask questions that make the person think.

Examples:

YAI/The National Institute for People with Disabilities (1999) recommends that staff follow this order for asking questions to improve thinking strategies:

- Open-ended: Instead of saying, "Use the pot holder before you take the pan out of the oven." ask, "What do you need to do before you take the pan from the oven?"
- Guided: These questions end with a fill-in-the-blank, and are usually easier to answer than open-ended questions. "It's time to take the cake out, so you need to get the _____?"
- Multiple Choice: When the first two types of questions are too hard, multiple-choice questions are the next option. You could say, " It's time to take the bars out of the oven. Do you want to use the green potholder or the red oven mitt?" (Both choices are acceptable answers.)
- Yes/No: These questions are easiest and should only be asked when the person hasn't been able to answer one of the previous types of questions. If you ask a yes/no question ask the person to tell you something that shows they understand. An example would be, "Can you find the red oven mitt?" followed by "Why do you need the oven mitt?"

RECOGNIZING CAUSE & EFFECT	
Typical Adult	**Many Adults with ID**
Learns cause and effect by watching.	Difficulty understanding cause and effect because of memory difficulties and lack of the ability to think abstractly. For some, there is belief in "magical" thinking (things just happen.) For example the person recognizes that a food item tastes burned but does not make the connection between going out of the kitchen to watch TV for a minute with the burned food.

Strategies That Help People Learn

It can be hard for people with ID to understand why things happen. They have trouble noticing or understanding a sequence of events. It is even harder to understand that one thing happens because of the other. Understanding if/then instructions may be particularly difficult without visual supports. **Staff need to take time to point out cause and effect when it happens**. Take the time to show people. For example, "If you do this, _____ will/won't happen. If you don't do this, _____ will/won't happen." It's also hard for people with ID to remember or recall things from the past unless care is taken to help make sure the event gets stored in long-term memory. **Take time to celebrate and call attention to the positive results of actions the person took.** When you compliment a person, state what they did that was good.
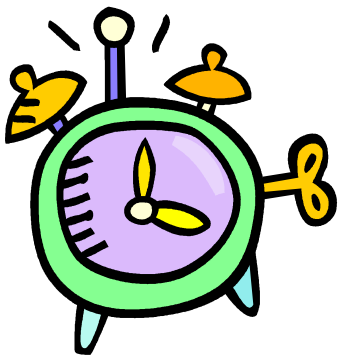
Examples:

- If a person doesn't like to go to bed at night, help them make a connection between how they feel in the morning (effect) with when they went to bed the night before (cause.) Of course, this should be done as teaching not in a punishing or disciplining tone. You may also need to help the person make a connection between following a bedtime routine (turning off the TV, getting comfortable, turning down the lights) and feeling like sleeping.
- Help people notice social cues, i.e., "Did you see how Sally smiled (effect) when you helped her finish up the dishes (cause.)
- Help people notice results: Not just you did a good job with vacuuming but also, now your floor will be clean enough to impress the landlord.
- Celebrate successes, **but be sure the person knows why you are celebrating**. "You get to put the star on your chart (effect) because you are here on time (cause)." And later, "We are going out for lunch (cause), because you were on time for work every day this month (effect.) See there are 20 checks on your chart."
- Whenever possible, follow activities with natural, social events that can serve to strengthen new behaviors. This is easier to maintain than artificial kinds of reinforcement.

SETTING AND MEETING GOALS	
Typical Adult	**Many Adults with ID**
Able to set goals and plan steps needed to meet them.	Limited ability to set, plan and meet goals by themselves, to express a goal or find meaning in a goal planned by someone else.

Strategies That Help People Learn

Help people set goals that make sense to them. To do that, set a small goal that is pretty easy to reach or won't take a long time to reach. These are called situational goals. Make it visual. Have a chart on the wall and help the person record the progress. Celebrate every step along the way. Involve the person in setting the goal, recording progress, and choosing the ways to celebrate. After reaching many situational goals related to a preferred activity the person may then be able to start thinking in terms of a result. So be sure to point out not only what the person did or why you are celebrating but what the result of what was done was.

Examples:

- If Deb wants to save money to buy something, have a concrete way to visualize progress, i.e., money in a clear glass bank. Use a chart with a line indicating how much money has been saved and how much she still needs. When enough has been saved, point out that she reached a goal and found a way to get what she wanted – saving money.
- If Cindy wants to lose 50 pounds, have some opportunities for short-term rewards. She could put marks on the calendar for every day she exercised and/or play a video game with staff in the evening if she follows her diet that day. Use a chart to show her weight loss. When she meets her goal, show her how something she used to wear fits better now.

LEARNING, THINKING & PROBLEM SOLVING	
Typical Adult	**Many Adults with ID**
Flexible. Uses a range of coping strategies. Able to adapt to new situations, changes, and problems.	Rely on habits for coping. Don't have a Plan B when the usual way doesn't work.

Strategies That Help People Learn

It helps to prepare people with ID for situations that are new or unfamiliar as part of providing Active Support. Talking about what to expect sometimes helps some people to relax but leaves other people feeling more anxious than ever. Making the unfamiliar more familiar or less scary helps but words do not always accomplish this. Sometimes people need to see what the new activity will be, where it fits in with what they already like and want to do and what aspects will be good. Showing trumps explaining. Take someone or something familiar along if you suspect it will be a difficult experience for them. Write out a social story to help the person see and process what to expect. Help people learn routines so they will feel safe. Assist
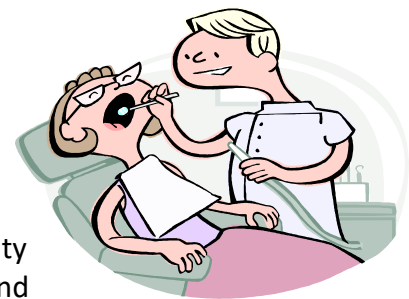
the person to practice some Plan B strategies by asking them how they want to handle the situation and brainstorming ideas.

Avoid down time and waiting if that is hard for the person. If possible, avoid situations that overwhelm people you support. The team should work on helping people tolerate difficult situations, but until then, find a way to avoid upsetting them, if possible.

Examples:

- Prepare the person ahead of time: i.e., "There will be some people you don't know, but I will be there." or "Linda (person's roommate) went to Dr. Wilson and she really liked him." Or "Karen's (another staff person) dad works there." Or – more concrete – "there will be a treat during intermission."
- Suggest that Kari bring her favorite possession or pastime along for situations she finds scary, "Do you want to bring your scrapbook along to look at while you wait?"
- Teach Gail to repeat, "I can do this" or "Everything will be OK". Practice in safe environments and cue her to say what she practiced when you notice frustration, fear, or anger.
- When entering new environments, have a routine and key words that Liz will remember. For example, you might always say something like, "There's a chair for you. That will be your 'safe place'." (This will only work if you have practiced the phrase "safe place" so that Liz knows what it means.)
- Ask for the first appointment in the morning or right after lunch if waiting is hard for Marilyn.
- Give Sue a way to ask for help when she is confused, frustrated or afraid. Help her learn what to say or give her a card that she can use to ask her question, i.e., "Could you say that again?" or "Go slower, please."
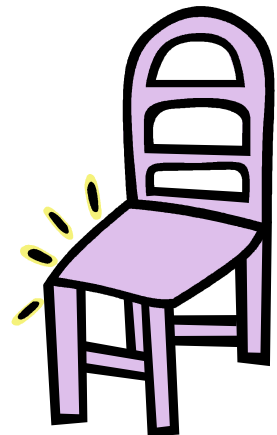
LANGUAGE ABILITIES	
Typical Adult	**Many Adults with ID**
Understands complex language.	Difficulty understanding complex language. Have trouble with the meaning of: • Pronouns (I, you, me, they) • Prepositions (above, behind, inside, over, under) • Long sentences • Time concepts; past and future.

Strategies That Help People Learn

Use words the person will understand. Keep sentences short. Give one direction at a time. When giving instructions, check frequently to see you were understood. Avoid asking yes or no questions to check for understanding. When people are eager to please staff, they may answer questions the way they think the staff person wants. It is better to ask the person to show you or tell you what they understand about what they have been told. Give the person time to process one idea before introducing another idea. Wait for them to complete each step that they are able in the task, then talk them through the ones they cannot complete but you as staff complete.

Help people learn **words they don't understand during routine activities**. When watering plants you might say, "I'm going to put the plate **under** the plant" and show where the plate is. At first staff would use gestures along with words to show the meaning of "under."

Examples:

- If Ron has a lot of trouble understanding time concepts, his staff will only **talk about what is in the here and now**. They might have him watch the clock and count the minutes, if trying to help him learn to wait.

- **Use the questioning sequence to help people learn prepositions**. For example, if you are trying to help people learn the concept "under": Start with an:
    - Open Ended Question: "Where is the plate?" If that doesn't work,
    - Ask a guided or fill in the blank question: "The plate isn't over the plant it's _____." If that doesn't work,
    - Ask a multiple-choice question: "Is the plate under or over the plant?" If that doesn't work,
    - Ask a yes or no question: "Is the plate over the plant? _____ Why not, where is the plate?"

Be careful not to quiz the person or ask questions just for the sake of pressuring someone to come up with the "right" answers. This leads people to learn to do what we insist on even if they don't really want to do that. Another way of using questions is to ask the person what they think might work best – putting a plate near the plant or under the plant to catch spills? This approach still helps to highlight important prepositions but without asking the person to answer a specific question with a word they didn't know in the first place.

- When teaching a task at work, give the directions one step at a time. As each step is completed, give the next step. Always follow the steps in the same sequence, with the same directions. If you say, "Fill the bucket to the line," and point to the line, make sure that all the staff do it the same way. As the person learns, just say "fill it to the line" and wait to see if they can do it without pointing to the line. The next step would be to wait and not say anything, only giving the cue or pointing if it is needed.

Summary

All people:

- Have value and deserve respect
- Want similar things out of life (a nice place to live and work; people who care about them)
- Can learn

Support staff can help people with intellectual disabilities learn easier and faster if they use methods that compensate (make up) for the person's disability including:

- Help people learn in the actual setting where the skill needs to occur using the actual materials.
- Help people learn functional skills the way they will actually be used.
- Control things that interfere with learning (noise, TV, other people, etc.) during teaching.
- Wait until the person is looking at the task before beginning to teach.
- Help the person understand why they are being asked to do something.
- Point out the important parts of the task and differences in materials that will help the person remember.
- Give only one thing to think about at a time.
- Keep the time between teaching sessions short.
- Practice new skills frequently.
- Focus on what you want the person to do, instead of what you don't want.
- Help the person recognize the answer from a list if they can't recall the answer without a list.
- Break tasks into smaller pieces of learning.
- Be consistent from day to day and teacher to teacher.
- Help the person learn simple remembering strategies.
- Give people chances to practice problem solving.
- Point out cause and effect when it happens.
- Take time to celebrate success and call attention to positive choices people make.
- Be sure the person knows why (cause) you are celebrating (effect.)
- Use words the person will understand.
- Keep sentences short.
- Give one direction at a time.

Lesson 3: Feedback Exercise

1. Difficulty _____ is a key factor used to decide if people qualify for DD services.

2. People with severe or profound intellectual disabilities and/or complex disabilities _____.

    a. Cannot learn
    b. Want similar things out of life as everyone does.
    c. Don't care about where they live or with whom they share their lives
    d. Aren't concerned about rights to privacy and respect

3. Which of the following would qualify as active treatment (there is more than one correct answer):

    a. Cooking supper for people who live in the group home
    b. Helping someone make a peanut butter sandwich
    c. Helping someone make a phone call to invite a friend over to play games
    d. Watching TV and eating popcorn
    e. Going for a van ride
    f. Assisting a person to wash his clothes
    g. Helping a person learn the names of the people who work at his job site
    h. A person working on the same assembly task at the day program with the same amount of assistance and feedback on performance for six months in a row

4. Which of the following would qualify as active support (here there is more than one correct answer.

    a. Finding out how the person wants you to help them before helping.
    b. Looking for opportunities to engage people in everyday activities.
    c. Introducing new activities a little at a time and repeating them often
    d. Doing tasks for people that they cannot do for themselves.
    e. Setting up the daily schedule that works for staff.
    f. Having someone assist with putting a pre-measured amount of soap in the laundry.
    g. Teaching someone to cook only when there is a scheduled objective.

5. _____ are the main teachers in community service provider agencies because they spend so much time with people receiving support.

6. Under what circumstances would it be appropriate to do a task for an individual rather than helping the person learn how to perform the skill?

7. Why is communication among staff so important when helping people with significant disabilities learn new skills?

8. It is difficult for people with ID to think about things that aren't actually present or visible. Therefore, learning should take place in the _____ _____ where the skill needs to occur using the _____ _____.

9. It is (difficult/easy) for people with significant intellectual disabilities to combine separate skills that are learned individually.

10. What strategies can teachers (direct support staff) use when a person with intellectual disabilities has trouble learning because of limited attention span?

11. What strategies can teachers (direct support staff) use when a person with intellectual disabilities has trouble learning because of difficulties with memory?

12. True   False   If a learner has difficulty learning, we may need to <u>increase</u> the number of teaching steps.

13. What strategies can direct support staff use to help a person with intellectual disabilities organize and practice new information?

14. True   False   The most important thing that staff can do to help people learn problem solving is give people chances to practice figuring things out.

15. Why is it important to make sure the person being supported knows the reason you are celebrating something they did?

16. Marc Gold, a famous researcher, said that whether or not a person with ID learns depends on the ability of the _____ .

17. How do the coping skills or ability to deal with new situations, delays or threatening situations for a person with ID compare to a person who doesn't have intellectual disabilities?

18. What are some strategies that staff can use to help people with intellectual disabilities cope with unfamiliar or threatening situations?

19. True   False   Difficulty understanding complex language (pronouns, prepositions, and time concepts) complicates the learning process for people with intellectual disabilities.

20. What can staff do to ensure that people with intellectual disabilities understand the language staff use during teaching and everyday interactions?

Lesson 4: Setting the Stage for Learning

OBJECTIVES:

- Describe strategies for building a caring relationship.
- Structure learning activities to engage the learner through Active Support.
- Explain what the phrase, "Success Breeds Success" means when applied to people receiving support.
- Describe direct support staff responsibilities related to providing opportunities for success.

Supportive Relationships
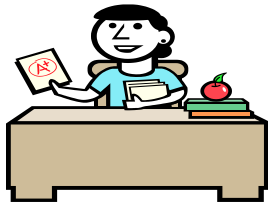
Think about people who have helped you learn the most? Usually, the best teachers are those who find a way to make a connection with the learner. When learners trust the teacher and believe that the teacher cares about them, learning improves. As people develop trust, they are more willing to try new things and skills increase.

Building relationships takes time. Think about how things changed when a substitute teacher filled in for a regular teacher you admired. Did learning change for that day or week? Weren't you relieved when your teacher returned to the classroom? Many people with ID/DD have not had experience with caring relationships or trust. Typically, people move in and out of their lives often. Staff turnover makes it hard for trust to develop. Caring is critical in the learning process. This is how one agency described the learning chain for the people they support (Suess, 2000):

Caring→Trusting→Self-Esteem→Learning

Caring relationships don't just take time, they take the right kind of time. Richard Foxx, a teacher and researcher, said that staff should make themselves into a big "M & M." People receiving support should look forward to your coming to work because they know you are happy to be there and attentive to their quality of life.

Good relationships don't happen by accident. They develop through repeated pleasant experiences. The American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (2004) suggests these to Building a Good Relationship:"
Spend time doing things the person likes to do.
When possible, help the person to avoid things that are disliked.
Learn to communicate well with each other.

"Keys

If people come to associate you with pleasant events and happy memories, they will want to spend time learning with you. They will trust that what you ask of them will be good for them.

Caring is a priority, but caring isn't enough. Many people care about the people they support but caring doesn't make up for poor relationships or missed opportunities. Staff must be effective in offering support. You will learn more about how to be effective in teaching in the next chapter.

Sometimes staff get too emotionally involved and assume a parenting relationship. You might say they "care too much." When this happens it is easy for staff to start "doing for" rather than helping the person to be engaged or exercise choice and control through greater independence.

Engaging Activities

Even if it's been a long time since you watched Sesame Street, you probably can still remember the characters and the songs. Do you know any young children who say they hate Sesame Street? There may be a few, but the vast majority of children like learning from Big Bird, Burt and Ernie. But, somewhere along the way, many of those same children say at one time or another, "I hate school!" What happens? Why isn't school as popular as Sesame Street? One key difference is that educational shows like Sesame Street made learning fun. The characters, skits, music, and even the teaching "engaged" children who watched.

What makes an activity engaging (appealing) for a person with intellectual disabilities? The answer is much the same as what "typical" adults will tell you. Choice, fun, and excitement are the keys (Suess, 2000.)

- **Choice** gives a person a sense of control or empowerment. Control lets people time their participation and engagement and leads to increased self-worth, self-esteem, and commitment to the task. **The learning task is more motivating when the learner selects it, can predict what will happen and has choices within the activity.**
- **The more exciting and fun an activity is, the more likely it will be engaging**. However, it has to be fun from the learners' point of view. Ask the team: What does this person like and dislike? If the person has a limited list of things that he or she enjoys, you might have to start with things that other people their age enjoy and try them out. The learner also senses whether or not you are interested in the activity. **A bored person is a boring teacher.**
- Remember that **people's preferences change**. It is important to observe the person on an ongoing basis to determine if the activity is still engaging.
- Choice can be difficult. If people don't have a lot of experience making choices, **sometimes choosing can be overwhelming**. Even if there are many things that a person

enjoys, we may only want to offer two or three things at one time. If the list of options is too big or wide open, the person can become confused.

- Some people automatically reject new choices because they are unfamiliar or because their past experiences have not been successful. That automatic "no" may not be a choice at all but rather, is a learned response.
- Often the only choice the person may perceive is whether the person who is helping them is warm and engaging and supportive. Think about your first interaction on the shift. Did you communicate that you were glad to see the person or tell them it is time for meds. Did you ask them about their day or just try to find out if they had eaten yet? Did you talk in a conversational tone or were you directive? Did you take over or give the person time to process what was said and respond?

Opportunities for Success

Sometimes people say "Success Breeds Success." Trying new things takes courage. When people take that risk and are successful (even with little steps) they are more likely to try again IF they experienced success from their perspective. People need to notice and acknowledge the effort made or the outcome achieved. When people notice, praise and reinforce, the learner starts to feel good about him or herself. The person develops positive self-esteem. People with self-esteem will try new things and learn more. It is a cycle. Success does breed success!

You are an important part of that cycle. Your job is to find something at which the learner can succeed or to find some way the person can succeed in being engaged in each activity as some level. . Some of the consumers at your agency haven't had a chance to be successful in the past. Their image of themselves is not good. It may be a challenge to find something that the person can do well. The secret is to start small and provide lots of chances to practice. Coaches do this all the time and so do parents. A toddler doesn't have to walk across the room to get smiles, shouts, clapping, hugs and kisses from parents. The first time the child tries to pull up next to a piece of furniture, mom and dad get on the phone to tell everyone. Their child isn't walking yet, but they noticed progress. The same principle applies here. Notice first steps and give lots and lots of opportunities to practice. Help as much as is needed, but not too much. And, finally CELEBRATE. Let the person know when you see progress. Don't wait until they can "run a marathon" so to speak.

Make sure the praise you give is genuine and conversational.

Lesson 4: Feedback Exercise

1. Why are caring relationships important for learning?

2. What does the American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities recommend for staff who want to develop a "Good Relationship".

3. Explain why caring (does not/does) make up for poor teaching.

4. Explain what is meant by "engaging" a person in activities.

5. What makes an activity engaging for a person with ID/DD?

6. Explain what the phrase, "Success Breeds Success" means when applied to people receiving support.

7. Whose responsibility is it to find things that each person can be successful at?

8. Describe staff responsibilities related to providing opportunities for success.

9. Give an example of how you would offer Active Support to help someone you support now succeed in an upcoming activity.

Lesson 5: Making It Possible for People to Learn

OBJECTIVES:

- Name the two basic ways to achieve Personal Outcomes.
- Tell why plans to help people learn new skills are almost always necessary.
- Describe the role of staff in helping people to learn.
- Explain the concept of natural supports.
- Describe how to make sure that a skill will be generalized.
- Explain the difference between formal and informal learning opportunities.

Guidelines for Deciding to Help a Person Learn a New Skill

There are three basic ways to assist people to reach Personal Outcomes:

a. Provide supports to meet the goal without requiring people to learn or change their behavior.
b. Develop a plan to assist the person to learn a new skill.
c. Develop a protocol for supporting the person in engaging in the new activity while they are learning.

Sometimes all of these methods are used. Let's use an example of a person with a physical disability who can't use a spoon by himself. The first step would be to make sure that all positioning supports are being used correctly. You might also use an adapted spoon and bowl. If the person's physical abilities allowed, you would, at some time, help him learn to use typical eating utensils. **Teaching programs are almost always a good idea** to help people gain more independence. Then you would help to break the task into steps and describe the supports needed to learn at each step so everyone who provides support does so consistently. This is called a protocol.

Effective Teaching

Living a self-determined life means being actively and consistently engaged in meaningful activities and experiencing choice and control throughout the day in each situation. For people with ID/DD, that may mean learning or improving daily living, job, leisure, communication, social, and decision-making skills. **Always remember, people with ID/DD can learn complex skills with good teaching, support, and opportunities to practice**. Staff are responsible for:

- Setting up the learning tasks in a way that will help ensure success.
- Using the best methods for helping people to learn.
- Providing practice with feedback.
- Revising the teaching plan if needed.
- Celebrating success.
- Fading support gradually over time as needed

Staff sometimes think teaching refers only to formal plans in the person's PCP. Take a minute to think about the people you support. How much time is spent helping people learn skills identified in their PCP? For most people, these goals take a very small portion of the day. Usually people spend most of their day with less structured activities. You have an opportunity to discover the unlimited opportunities to engage each person in living their own life within the day-to-day activities at home, work and in the community. The learning that takes place during these times is called "**incidental learning.**" It is just as important as formal teaching. Even though we don't keep data during these teaching moments, using Active Support strategies will help people learn more and find the activity to be more meaningful. Deciding what to teach, where to help them learn, who will teach, and how to teach will determine whether or not people learn. (DiLeo, D.,1993.)

> For example, Wilson has a formal teach objective to volunteer at a food pantry by carrying in a loaf of bread and putting cans on the shelf. However, his staff took a look at these activities and then looked for other opportunities for him to practice similar skills in an informal way. They thought that he could carry his grooming supplies into the bathroom in a small bag, help to unpack the cans after a shopping trip and home and help to put supplies into his storage closet. Not only did he learn at the volunteer setting but in many similar teachable moments. The staff also helped him to get his money bag out of the drawer and put CDs into a basket in the living room. The opportunities are endless.

Deciding What to Teach

When teaching is selected as the best way to reach Personal Outcomes, the team needs to ask:

a. Is this skill or activity **needed for where the person wants to live, work, or have fun**?
b. Could the person find the activity to be very meaningful without this skill?
c. Is there another way he or she could achieve the goal faster?
d. How can he or she be supported to succeed in this activity right away?

As much as possible, use these questions to determine what to help people learn. This is not always easy. Some Personal Outcomes are so broad that almost any teaching plan will seem like a good idea. Just remember, time is precious for both staff and people with **ID**. **Every effort should be made to focus on things MOST necessary for reaching the person's goals**. For example, William could have a lot of choice and control over his entire day if he could use

objects to communicate. So that was selected as a teaching program for him to give him the best opportunity to maximize choice and control. His team knew this would be a pivotal skill and enhance his quality of life.

Decisions about what to help the person learn should be made by the person with the support of the PCP team. The self-assessment helps the team decide what the person wants most. Often goals related to safety, health, rights, or protection from harm are most pressing. After these needs are met, the team asks questions like these to help choose what to teach:

- What does the person want to learn?
- What would maximize the person's choice and control
- What strengths or interests does the person already have that may be related to a potential goal?
- What skills will help the person meet his or her goals?
- What skills will improve the person's quality of life?
- What skills will increase chances to participate?
- What skills will improve relationships or social interaction?
- Which skills will the person learn quickly?
- Which skills will the person have lots of chances to practice?
- What skills or behaviors will improve the person's image or reputation?

Practically anything is an appropriate learning goal as long as it is useful - and not illegal, unethical, immoral or self-destructive.

Deciding Where to Teach, When to Teach, Who will Teach, and How Often to Teach

Develop the protocol (teaching plan) for each skill considering the way people with ID learn best. Many people with intellectual disabilities do not generalize skills very well. This means it's hard for them to transfer what they learn in one situation to another. **Therefore, it is important to use what we know about learning traits of people with ID:**

- **Help people learn in natural settings** (the settings where the skill will be used.) People learn faster in the actual setting and among others who are doing the task. As soon as the person learns the skill, gradually fade out your support.

- **Help people learn in the presence of other people, if the presence of others is not distracting or embarrassing for the learner.** Others (peers, coworkers, family members, other staff) may have a more powerful impact than the teacher. Help people learn in a place that motivates the person to learn the skill and where he/she can observe others enjoying the benefits of the skill. If the person has trouble paying attention with others present, or if the skill is very difficult for the learner, you may have to begin teaching in a less distracting place. But as soon as possible, move to a more natural environment (place). Of course some skills, like how to take medication should be taught in a private

place. If it is embarrassing for the learner to have others watch while they are learning, respect his/her choice to learn the skill privately.

- **Structure the setting so that learning is likely to occur.** Pick a setting which allows the learner to stay focused on the task. Pay attention to the impact of lighting, noise, equipment, seating, materials, etc. Get materials ready in advance and time the teaching to match the person's interest level. Think about what would be needed for the person to be successful in the activity at some level.

- **Teach when the skill would normally be used**. The best time to help people learn tooth brushing is after meals and before bed. The best time to help people learn to cook is at mealtime.

- **Use the learner's preferences to structure learning**. If the person has more energy in the morning, plan to teach then. However, if the learner is not a morning person, wait at least until after that first cup of coffee.

- **Use real materials during practice sessions.** Using cardboard money to purchase items in a pretend store will not give the person the skills they need to purchase items in a store.

- **Use natural supports**. The concept of natural supports refers to the kind of support that members of a community give each other. There are many situations where people participating in the activity can help teach. Some examples of natural supports include:

  o Aerobics class members with ID learn the routines from the coach and people in the class. Rather than depending on agency staff, those who know the skill teach it.

  o An employee with ID learns how to clean a new piece of equipment from a coworker. Generally, teaching coworkers how to provide job supports to an employee with ID is not difficult or time consuming. Natural supports are better for both the worker with ID and the employer.

  - **Provide frequent chances to practice the skill**. Teaching an activity less than one time per week is not effective for most people with ID. Frequent practice is needed.

- **Arrange for spaced practice.** Learning and remembering are not the same thing. Skills will be remembered better if some time passes between practice sessions. Instead of spending hour after hour teaching the same skill (massed practice), help people learn the skill throughout the day or week. The goal is to help the skill become part of long-term memory.

- **Embed the skill into daily routines.** Practicing something over and over without any connection to how the skill will be used can be boring. Some learners may even refuse to participate. Instead, find ways to embed (practice the skill in many activities and settings) the skill in daily routines. This is very important for motor, social, communication, and decision making skills.
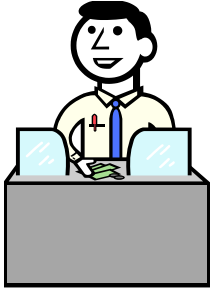
No matter what the skill, we cannot assume the person has learned until the person can do the skill when staff aren't present. For example, using sign language in one's apartment with staff does not mean the person will be able to communicate in a restaurant, bank, or health club. It is crucial to teach in actual settings taking advantage of "real" materials and people who normally are present. **The role of staff is teach the person to be successful without them, NOT to make the person dependent on them for success**. This is called generalization. When individuals can perform the skill without staff in a variety of settings, the skill has been generalized.

Effective Teaching Practices

In many agencies, the responsibility for developing teaching plans is assigned to one person (i.e., QDDP, program coordinators.) However, in order to take advantage of "teachable moments," everyone needs to teach well. Staff should also coach others (i.e., coworkers, aerobics instructors, family members) in how to help people learn.

Some teaching guidelines include:

- **Teach skills with a purpose.** If the skill has no meaning for the learner, the teaching plan won't work. Skills that are important and a part of the person's normal routine are much more motivating. In addition, there will be more chances to practice.

- **Use strategies that match the learning style of the person.** How do you learn best? Some people prefer to listen to instructions and others learn better watching. Still others need a combination of visual cues (pictures, demonstrations), verbal prompts (directions), or physical assistance (guiding the person through the motion.) Talk with other staff and the learner to find out what works for each person. Does he/she learn best when you show what to do and have him/her imitate you? Do verbal directions help, confuse, or annoy the learner? How does the person respond to physical assistance?

- **Maximize choice and control** within activities by following the "Little and Often" rule and by "Dipping in and Dipping out" as needed to give just the right amount of support to help the person succeed.

- **Build on the person's strengths and interests.** Good teachers identify and build on the strengths of learners. If you had trouble with math in high school, you probably didn't
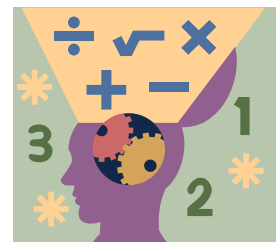
choose a job that requires a lot of math. However, if there were other things about the job that you really liked, you might learn the math required. The same is true of people with ID. Find things that they are good at and/or things they really like doing.

- **Provide short, frequent teaching sessions.** Long teaching sessions can make people tired and bored. If learning becomes something the person hates, s/he will avoid it in the future. It is better to help people learn brief daily sessions. Short, frequent sessions increase learning and are more fun for the learner and the teacher.

- **Be consistent when you teach a new skill.** Systematic instruction (step-by-step procedures done the same way every time) makes it possible for people with ID/DD to learn. Use the same cues (directions) and materials to help the learner know what to expect. This allows the person to pay attention and learn faster. Cross train staff and advise every staff person to teach similarly.

- **Help people learn to generalize skills**. After the person learns the skill, the teacher can begin to change some of the conditions (place, cues, teacher, materials) so that **generalization** (ability to use the skill in different places with other people) will occur.

- **Treat the learner with respect.** A positive relationship between the learner and teacher increases learning (DiLeo, 1993.) Show respect for the person by giving your full attention to the task. Through the positive relationship there may be days the person does not want to complete the task, therefore, they need to communicate with the other staff to teach at a different time or on a different day. No task should go without being taught.

- **Observe for signs that the learner is tiring or frustrated.** Don't assume that a person understands what you are teaching. Check for understanding. Provide more information or better directions if the person is confused. Take a break if they are tired.

- **Encourage the learner.** Celebrate when people try to learn. Help the learner see how this skill will help them meet their goals. Find another way when there are barriers.

- **Let them do it.** Doing a task for someone robs the person of the chance to learn. Take the time to let the person figure out the task. Provide help, but give them freedom to try without fear of making a mistake.

- **Act as a good role model.** Learners pick up on the language, actions, and mood of their teachers. Be mindful of what you are "teaching by example."

- **Expect success and share the results of teaching with others.** People live up to the expectations we set for them. A good teacher looks for different methods when the person doesn't learn. When the learner is successful, tell others.

- **Keep track of progress.** Data collection helps to make teaching decisions and provides information for planning. Either the teacher or the learner can complete charting. Typically, the date, the amount of assistance, and the learner progress (i.e., accuracy, time, number completed) are recorded. If it seems that the person is not making progress, ask for help from your supervisor, QDDP, or program coordinator. **While data collection is done because it is required, it's primary function is to ensure we are doing a good job teaching (that the person is actually learning.**)

Lesson 5: Feedback Exercise

1. Name the four basic strategies for achieving goals and objectives.
2. Give two reasons why teaching programs are almost always necessary.
3. Why is informal teaching and "incidental learning" so important for people with intellectual disabilities?
4. Who should make decisions about what to teach?
5. How does the self-assessment help in deciding what to teach?
6. What questions should the team use to help decide what to teach?
7. What are important considerations for where to teach?
8. What are important considerations for when to teach?
9. What are important considerations for who will teach?
10. What are important considerations for how often to teach?
11. Describe how you would apply the concepts of natural learning opportunities to teach each of the following skills:

    a. using money

    b. laundry

    c. cleaning a hotel room

    d. ordering from a menu

12. Describe your role in helping people with disabilities learn.
13. The role of staff is to help the person learn skills to be successful (with/without) them; NOT to make the person _____ on them for success.
14. Describe how to ensure generalization will occur.
15. People with intellectual disabilities are able to _____ when they receive _____ and _____.
16. Think about the people you help learn. **Give a specific example** of how you would apply each of the following teaching practices:

    a. Teach with purpose.
    b. Use strategies that match the learning style of the person.
    c. Build on the person's strengths.
    d. Provide short, frequent teaching sessions.
    e. Be consistent when you help a person learn a new skill.
    f. Treat the learner with respect.
    g. Observe for signs that the learner is tiring or frustrated.
    h. Encourage the learner.
    i. Provide support or do with not for
    j. Act as a good role model.
    k. Expect success and share the results of teaching with others.
    l. Keep track of progress.

Lesson 6: Using Task Analysis and Chaining

OBJECTIVES:

- Explain what is meant by "backward chaining."
- Explain what is meant by "forward chaining."
- Divide a task into at least five steps.
- Match each step with graded assistance for support

Task Analysis

Almost all the behaviors or tasks consist of lists or "chains" of behaviors. You use task analyses every day. When you follow the cooking directions on a package or read a recipe you are using a chain of behaviors or task analysis. When you get money from an ATM or get your car washed, you follow the directions provided, which are also task analyses.

A task analysis organizes an activity to be learned into teachable steps. It is much easier to help a person learn a series of small steps, one at a time, than it is to teach the whole behavior at once. Imagine that you were trying to help someone learn to drink from a glass. This behavior could be broken down into a chain or sequence of responses such as:

1. grasp the glass
2. pick up the glass
3. drink from the glass
4. return the glass to the table
5. let go of the glass
6. repeat with less help

The number of steps in the task analysis is determined by the needs of the learner. In the example above, each of these steps could also be broken into smaller steps. It's possible that drinking from a glass could actually involve more than 15 steps. This doesn't mean that every learner would need to be taught each of the 15 steps – only if the person needed it broken down that simple. **In general, as learning needs increase, the number of steps increases.**

Using a Task Analysis and Chaining to Help People Learn

Before developing a task analysis, we must decide how the activity will be done. Most activities can be performed more than one way. For example, shaving could be done using shaving cream and a razor or using an electric shaver. Other people decide they would rather grow a beard and have the barber trim it up once in a while.

Use what you know about the learner to determine how he/she will be taught to do the task. For some skills it is also important to consider how the task is performed in the natural setting.

Whenever possible help the person learn a method that will help them fit in with others in the setting. We could help the person learn to drink their soup from a cup, but if they often need to eat soup with a spoon at work where everyone else uses spoons, it might be good to have a goal of learning to use a spoon also.

After selecting the method, develop a list of the steps in the order they normally occur. For example, suppose you wanted to help a man learn how to use an electric razor. The most effective way to help a person learn a complex task would be to break the behavior down into smaller steps. Then help him learn each step in order. The person will need to learn where the razor is stored, how to plug it in, how to move the razor across his face, when to stop, and finally, to put the razor away. It would be almost impossible to teach this skill without dividing it into a series of smaller steps.

The next step is to plan the order for teaching the steps. In **forward chaining** we help the person learn the first step in the sequence, then the second, and so on until the final step is reached. The alphabet is an example of a skill learned by forward chaining. Learners can be dependent on some chains of behavior and become confused if the chain is broken. For example, if you are asked, "What letter comes before q?", how do you find the answer? Most of us start reciting the alphabet with "a" and say the letters until you have the answer, " .... l, m, n, o, p, **Q**".

Sometimes a **backward chaining** procedure is better. Backward chaining involves teaching the last step first, then the next-to last step and so on until you reach the first response in the sequence. Dressing and undressing are often taught using backward chaining. Let's say you want to help a person learn how to make a bed. Using backward chaining, you would help them make the bed the same way you eventually want them to do it. When you get everything done except for pulling the bedspread over the pillows you would ask them to finish "making the bed. Provide only as much assistance as is needed to do the last step. When they pull the covers over the pillows, reinforce them for "making the bed." Gradually you would expect the person to do more and more of the task. If you keep working backwards, they will learn to make the bed independently. This could work for teaching chores at home or at a job setting, if the person is learning to be a hotel or hospital housekeeper.

The **advantage of backward chaining is that it offers an automatic reward system.** Learning to buy pop from a machine is a good example of when and why to use backward chaining. If the learner didn't know how to use the machine, it would be best if the first step they learned was to get the can of pop after it dropped down. The "teachers" would complete all of the steps from finding the money, dropping it in, and selecting the pop.

Whether you use a forward or backward chaining procedure will depend to some degree on the nature of the task and on what seems most effective for the learner. Some skills can only be done forward chaining. Some people learn much better with backward chaining. It takes some trial and error to figure out what is best for each learner.

Lesson 6: Feedback Exercise

1. There are two behaviors listed below. Break each behavior down into a sequence of at least five steps.

   A. HAND WASHING

      1.

      2.

      3.

      4.

      5.

   B. PUTTING ON A SOCK

      1.

      2.

      3.

      4.

      5.

2. How would you help someone learn to put their pants on using backward chaining?

3. In general, as learning needs increase, the number of steps _____.

4. The advantage of _____chaining is that it offers an automatic reward system.

Lesson 7: Providing Assistance During Learning

OBJECTIVES:

- Describe how to use prompts during instruction.
- Explain how to fade assistance when teaching.

In addition to dividing a task into a list of small steps, there are many teaching methods that help people learn. Using a sequence of prompts, cues, or reminders that move from providing maximum to minimal support to succeed is also called: providing Graded Assistance

Prompting

Both the learning needs of the person and the difficulty of the task determine the type of support (prompts) needed. **Prompts** are brief cues (instructions) used to help the learner know what is expected and how to succeed in performing each step of the task. Some types of prompts and examples are listed below:

- **Natural cues** are signals which are present naturally. For example, a laundry buzzer indicates that it is time to take clothing out of the dryer. An empty supply bin means the worker needs to get more supplies. A timer on the stove reminds the baker that the cake is done. A picture recipe on a package tells how to prepare the food. Our goal is for people to learn to do the skill when the natural cue is present.

- **Visual Cues** are objects, photos, pictures or icons that signal the person what the next step might be or how to perform that step. For example: Placing a box of cereal out on the counter may signal the person to start fixing breakfast and lessens the person's dependence on getting a reminder from staff. Many community bathrooms now have visual reminders for people to wash their hands. Calendars, schedules and phone alerts can also provide some type of visual cue. Many learners with disabilities, especially those who do not read, prefer getting information about what to do and how to succeed in a visual format.

- **Verbal instructions** (prompts) are a common way to help people know what to do. In an employment setting, a supervisor or co-worker may give verbal directions. When teaching people with ID, these cues should be short, direct and related to each step. Keep the directions specific and descriptive when the person is first learning. ("Marie, rinse the soap off the dish.") Be consistent (the same from one day to the next and from one teacher to the next.) As the person starts to gain the skill or routine, shift to non-specific cues. (i.e., "What's next?") Avoid belittling the person or using a parental tone of voice. We use verbal cues to help people learn natural cues. For example, if we want people to learn to brush their teeth when they are done eating (natural cue), we would verbally prompt them to brush their teeth by saying, "What do you need to do after

meals?" If they don't respond, say "After eating, brush your teeth." When writing a protocol or training program be specific about the kind of comment to make. Don't just say – "Give a verbal prompt."

- **Gestures** include pointing, tapping, or touching the correct choice. Examples of gestural prompts include: pointing to food still left on the pan being cleaned; touching an object; pointing to the time clock to remind the person to punch in for work; tapping a wrist watch to prompt the person to take a lunch break.

- **Modeling** involves doing a task or a step in a task and then waiting for the learner to do the same thing. When modeling, do the task along side the person rather than across or in front of him or her. This way he/she can view how the skills should be done. Some tasks lend themselves to showing a model of what the item will look like when the task is completed. For example: If you are teaching someone to fold a towel, having a towel present that is already folded can be helpful as a model.

- **Physical prompts** or hands-on assistance may be used for part or all of the task, depending on the person's learning needs. For example, place the teacher's hands over the learner's hands on a mop handle to clean the floor.

It is important to pick the prompt that works best for each learner. Try various types of prompts to see what is most effective for the person and the task. To avoid drawing negative attention to the person select the prompt that is most natural to the situation, yet effective. This will also help make sure the person will still know how to do the task when you are no longer there.

Some tasks demand a specific type of prompt. For example, when teaching a person how to ride a bike, physical prompts are needed. For many tasks, however, using "**least-to-most"** assistance is best. Give the very least amount of help the learner might need to perform the task. Gradually increase the amount of help if the lessor prompt doesn't work. Physical prompts are considered to be the most amount of assistance because the teacher is actually doing part of the task. Verbal prompts may create less dependence on the teacher, but some learners can't think when others are talking. Verbal instructions actually make it harder for some people to do a task.

Providing help with new tasks helps ensure "**error free learning.**" The person is prevented from failing because theDSP provides support before an error occurs. Success at a new task is very motivating to the learner as well as the teacher. However, if this method is used, it is easy to get into the habit of giving too many prompts, to get things done quickly. Too many prompts can be confusing and/or annoying for the learner. In addition, providing too much help, for too long, teaches the learner to depend on prompts. Some DSPs also talk too much during a learning process. They think they are telling the person what to do, step by step but sometimes all that talk, distracts the person or takes more time for the person to process before they can get on with the task.

To avoid teaching dependence:

1. Always give the person a chance to try the task without any prompts first because sometimes people have learned to wait for you to do something for them.
2. Keep prompts simple.
3. Use prompts only when needed.
4. Give just enough support to ensure the person succeeds
5. Pair prompts so that one can be faded out while a less intrusive prompt is substituted.
6. Fade prompts systematically as soon as possible.

Jim Rice, Focus Teaching Systems, makes the following recommendations for using prompts:

- Teachers should position themselves 45 degrees from midline rather than face-to-face or behind the person.(Some people cannot visually reverse a demonstration).
- Give only as much information as the person needs.
- The teacher should try to influence the learner rather than giving the person lots of detailed verbal instructions. There is no need for a lot of talking.
- Make eye contact with the task rather than the learner. This directs the learner's attention to the task as well.
- Use shadowing rather than constant hand-over-hand contact if a physical assist is necessary. Shadowing refers to fading physical contact in and out based on the needs of the learner. The teacher places his hands near the learners hand but actual physical contact is only 3-5 seconds at a time.
- The teachers hand should be palms up, never in fists.
- Show the learner a better way if they need correction. Say "Try this," instead of "No".
- Take what you can get if the person isn't able to do the skill perfectly. Use shaping to refine the behavior into the desired skill. (Note: Shaping will be described later.)
- Watch the person who works best with the learner. What is their style? Try to do what they do.
- Base all teaching on respect for the person.

Fading: Gradual Elimination of Cues and Assistance

Study the situations in the drawings below. In each of the situations, the person needed help or assistance to do something.
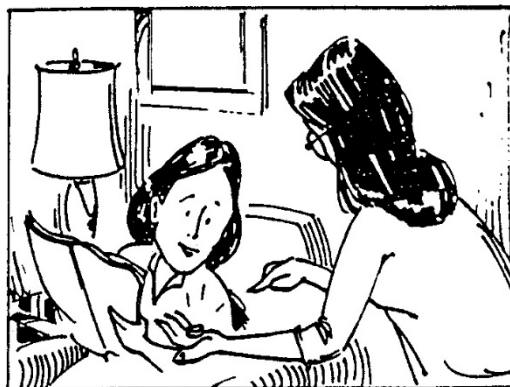
If Lynwood is given frequent prompts or cues, he can prepare the pancakes.

Sarah needs to be reminded, or she may miss her medication.

The people in these situations can perform a task or skill only if someone gives verbal or physical prompts. They know how to perform the steps of the task. However, they need to learn when, where and in what sequence to perform them. When this happens, the aim should be to teach the person to do the task without help. A teaching technique called **FADING** is needed.

Fading is defined as "gradually reducing help so that the learner completes the task by him or herself." Fading helps the learner move from full assistance to some assistance to independent task performance.

Fading Out Physical Assistance

The gradual elimination of physical prompts may be done two ways:

1. **Gradually provide less physical assistance**. For example, when teaching Leah how to use a spoon, it may first be necessary to completely guide her hand during the plate-to-mouth motion. As she becomes more skilled, you would gradually reduce the physical guidance so that Leah is doing more of the effort on her own. This may be accomplished by gradually reducing the pressure of your grip on Leah's hand. Later, slowly move your hand to her wrist, then further up her arm until your hand is resting on her shoulder, and finally move away from Leah.

2. **Gradually withdraw assistance earlier in the list of steps**, so that the learner completes more and more of the task by him or herself. This is usually done by initially providing physical guidance throughout all of the steps, and then gradually withdrawing your help from the last step. This procedure is then carried out for the next-to-last step, and so on, until the learner can complete all of the steps without help.

Fading Verbal Prompts

Fading verbal prompts can be done by gradually providing fewer instructions, and also by providing less complete or detailed instructions. Read the following examples:

1. **Gradually providing less detailed prompts or cues**. For example:

   "Sarah, your alarm went off, it's time for your medication – please go to the office and get it."
   "Sarah, it's time for your medication."
   "Sarah, it's time."
   "Sarah" (point towards the room where the medications are stored)
   No prompts at all.

2. **Gradually provide fewer prompts or instructions.** Gail really enjoyed going to the mall. Initially, Deb had to go with Gail and help her make purchases and handle money. Most of Deb's help involved telling Gail what to do next, what to say, and so forth. These prompts allowed Gail to shop, but she didn't learn to shop by herself. In an effort to change this, Deb began to decrease her verbal prompts. Instead of guiding Gail to each store, she let Gail lead and gave help only if Gail seemed to need it. Deb used the same procedure in the store. Deb discovered that Gail had already learned many of the necessary skills. She knew where to find the stores and where the various items were located. Deb hadn't found this out before, because she had never let Gail shop on her own. There were a few steps of the shopping task that Gail didn't remember, so Deb still had to help a little, but the main thing was that Gail was making progress. During the next several shopping trips, Deb gradually eliminated all prompts until Gail was shopping without help. Deb still went shopping with Gail several more times. Even though further physical help was no longer needed, Gail would need Deb's "support" for a while.

Fading Gestural Prompts

Fading gestural prompts can be done by gradually providing gestures for fewer steps in the task, and also by providing less complete gestures. Read the following examples:

1. **Fading the number of gestural prompts.** Jim was teaching Pam how to wash windows. Gestural prompts seemed to work best for her, so Jim pointed to the supplies that were

needed. He also pointed to areas on the window that needed washing and pointed to the supply cabinet when Pam finished the task. As Pam learned the skill, Jim started his fading by waiting to see if she needed the gesture before providing it.

2. **Fading the size of the gestures**. Jim could have faded prompts in this same example by using smaller or less obvious gestures until he wasn't using gestures at all.

Points to Remember

1. Give the learner a chance to respond, before giving prompts. If the learner doesn't make a response, then provide help - but give him or her a chance first.

2. When you are using fading, you are doing more than simply withdrawing "extra" assistance. You are teaching the person how to respond in a new situation - one in which he or she performs a task without help. If this learning situation is changed too rapidly the learner may not know what to do.

Remember that your role as a teacher is not over after you have stopped helping (giving prompts.) You should stay close to the learner at first and slowly move further and further away. If the person stops or doesn't seem to know what to do, provide more assistance and then reduce your help even more gradually than before.

Putting it All Together

Below is a sample of a teaching protocol that pairs graded assistance with the steps of a task analysis. The protocol shows each step that the person needs to succeed with the activity and the individualized support needed to help that person succeed. Notice that some very difficult steps are being performed by the staff because we are engaging the person through partial participation. Notice also, that steps that must be taken to maximize success before instruction begins are also included. Finally, notice that general terms such as verbal prompt or gestural prompt are not used because they are not specific enough. Different people who are providing the support may interpret those words quite differently. Engagement is individualized based on person-centered planning.

Task Steps	Support as Graded Assistance	Data					
7. Drop towel into hamper	Bring hamper to kitchen. Give opportunity to try; model behavior wait 3 seconds, use prompt hierarchy	5	5	5	5	5	5
6. Pour water into sink	Offer to do this step for the person						
5. Remove item from water	Give opportunity to try; model behavior wait 3 seconds, use prompt hierarchy	4	4	4	4	4	4
4. Swish item in water	Give opportunity to try; model behavior wait 3 seconds, use prompt hierarchy	3	3	3	3	3	3
3. Place up to 5 items in water	Give opportunity to try; model behavior wait 3 seconds, use prompt hierarchy	2	2	2	2	2	2
2. Swish either hand in water to make suds.	Give opportunity to try; model behavior wait 3 seconds, use prompt hierarchy	1	1	1	1	1	1
1. Place warm soapy water in shallow tray on wheelchair tray	Staff will perform this step						
Finish eating meal and stay in kitchen for cleanup.	Before starting place a dry dishcloth on his wheelchair tray. Fill shallow dish with water and add soap. Do not swish to make suds yet. Bring to person and set on wheelchair tray.	V	M	G	P	H	I
		Dates					

Lesson 7: Feedback Exercise

1. Define the teaching technique called prompting.

2. Give the learner a chance to respond, _____ giving prompts.

3. Describe how you would decide which type of prompt to use.

4. What can the teacher do to avoid teaching dependence?

5. Define the teaching technique called fading.

6. List two ways of gradually eliminating (fading) physical assistance.

7. Explain how "shadowing" differs from "hand-over-hand" physical assistance.

8. Write three progressive verbal cues that would illustrate a fading technique being used.

9. Describe how you would fade a gestural prompt that is used to show the person how to wipe a mirror using an "S" motion.

10. Explain what is meant by "error free learning."

11. What are some potential problems with error free learning?

12. Think about the people you help with learning new tasks. Describe a specific teaching situation in which you apply the "least to most assistive prompt process".

13. _____ at a new task is very motivating to the learner as well as the teacher.

14. Show the learner a better way if they need correction. Say ____ _____ instead of "No".

Lesson 8: Reinforcement

OBJECTIVES:

- Explain how to use reinforcement when helping people learn.
- Describe accidental reinforcement and provide an example.
- Give examples of unlearned and learned reinforcers.
- Describe how to select reinforcers.
- Describe age-appropriate guidelines for selecting reinforcers.
- Describe how legal rights affect the selection of reinforcers.
- State the only time a legal right may be denied.
- Describe two reasons why it is desirable to use immediate reinforcement.
- Describe the "no news is good news" concept. When is it used?
- Explain how to use shaping.

Reinforcement
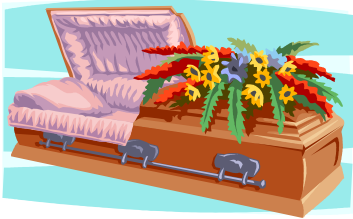
This lesson will explain reinforcement, a key tool in helping people learn. Reinforcement occurs when the teacher pairs something the learner wants (the reinforcer) with a desired behavior to increase the behavior. Behavior is the way people respond. Kicking is a behavior but so is eating, saying hello, or reading. The only people who don't have "behaviors" are dead people.

Many people with ID have either not learned correct behaviors or have learned inappropriate (badly chosen) ways to act or behave. **Our goal is to help people increase behaviors that help them**. Sometimes in order to help people, we may need to assist them to decrease some behaviors. The best way to do that is to help people learn more acceptable behaviors that will help them reach their goals.

Reinforcement is used to:

- Help people learn a new skill
- Change or improve a behavior or skill
- Maintain correct behavior

A reinforcer is something the person likes well enough to change his or her behavior. You might really like sweets, but would you clean toilets all day to get a mint? Not many people would. Examples of common reinforcers include: compliments, favorite activities, food or drink, or objects. The most common reinforcer is praise.

Some people confuse reinforcement with rewards. But reinforcement is more than a reward. Rewards are given to people for doing something. **A reinforcer increases the likelihood the behavior will reoccur**. For reinforcement to occur, the following three things have to happen**:**

a. The **behavior occurs** (the person does something.)
b. **After the behavior occurs, something else happens** (a "reinforcer" is provided). This is sometimes called a "consequence."
c. The **behavior increases or improves**. The next time the same situation arises; the person is more likely to do the same behavior.

Let's look at examples:

Behavior occurs	"Reinforcer" is provided	Behavior is strengthened
Ron mows the lawn.	Ron's wife thanks him and brings him a cold drink.	A week later, Ron mows the lawn without being asked.
Gail smiles and says "Hello" to Liz.	Liz smiles and says, "Good Morning."	The following morning Gail smiles and says "Hello" to Sue and Pam.

Let's look at all three parts more closely:

1. **The behavior has to happen:** The person must do the desired behavior.

2. **The reinforcer must come AFTER the behavior:** The person earns a reinforcer by doing the behavior. If the behavior doesn't happen, the person doesn't get the reinforcer (the thing or activity they want.) **No behavior--No reinforcer**. It is a mistake to try to give the person a reinforcer even if they don't do the behavior. The following example points this out:

Marva gave students colored coins for doing school work, getting good grades, etc. Twice a day, they could exchange the coins for things they wanted or for permission do things (play on the computer, extra gym time, etc.) Marva designed the plan so that the better the children did, the more coins they earned. She found they did much better when she gave coins for doing good work.
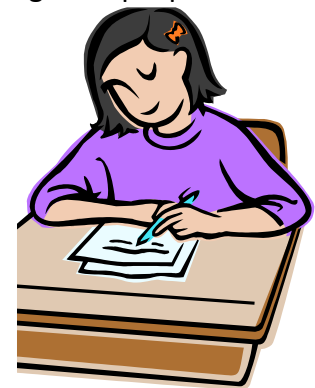
To test how well her system worked Marva started giving "free" coins. Marva gave every child 10 coins each day for five days. It didn't matter if they did their work or not. Even though students were still getting coins, their schoolwork decreased. The students had been working at a high level, not just because they were

getting coins. They did their work **because they earned coins only when they did a good job**.

3. **The behavior is strengthened**. We can't say a behavior has been reinforced just because the behavior occurred and we give what we think is a reinforcer. **We must look at the future.** If the behavior increases over time it was reinforced. If the behavior does not increase, reinforcement did NOT take place.

Identifying the Best Reinforcers

Natural Reinforcers -- Sometimes reinforcers are a natural part of the activity or behavior that is desired. Here are two examples:

Behavior occurs	"Reinforcer" is provided	Behavior is strengthened
Diane fixes her hair using a new curling iron.	She looks in mirror and likes how she looks.	She uses the curling iron the next morning
Dixie made scrambled eggs.	She gets to eat scrambled eggs.	She makes scrambled eggs again another day.
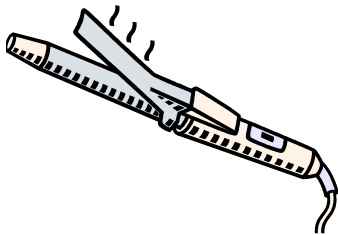
It's always best to use natural events if the person finds them reinforcing. But what if Diane didn't care about how she looks (at least enough to get up early to use her curling iron.) Maybe Dixie doesn't like to eat scrambled eggs. Their behaviors will NOT increase without the addition of an extra reinforcer. We will have to find items, events, or activities to reinforce Diane and Dixie before these behaviors would increase or improve.

If the use of natural reinforcers are not enough to help people learn a new behavior or to maintain a desirable behavior, we need to find out what the learner finds reinforcing. **Everyone has items, events or activities that will reinforce them.** It is important for staff to find things that are reinforcing for each person.

Unlearned Reinforcers -- Unlearned reinforcers are those we are "born with." People don't have to be taught that these items or events are desirable. Examples of unlearned reinforcers are:

- Food when we are hungry.
- Relief from pain.
- Warmth when we are cold.
- Water when we are thirsty.

Unlearned reinforcers are common to almost all people. Food works as a reinforcer when we are hungry. However, food would not be a very good reinforcer right after a big meal. (While

unlearned reinforcers are quite powerful, there are sometimes where it wouldn't be right to use them. These limits will be discussed in the next section.)
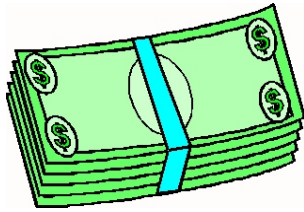
Learned Reinforcers -- Learned reinforcers gain their value by being paired with other reinforcers. Money is a good example. Give a one-year-old a dollar bill and he or she is likely to try to eat it, throw it on the floor, or stick it in your eye. Give the dollar to that same child five years later, and you've made a good friend. The five-year-old has learned that the dollar can be exchanged for many things.

Sometimes people get confused about whether or not a reinforcer is learned or unlearned. This becomes a problem when they think certain things are reinforcing for everyone. For example, smiles and hugs are both learned reinforcers. Babies aren't born knowing that smiles are a good thing. After smiles and hugs are paired with food and other comforts, they learn that smiles are positive. The words *Good, Fine! That's Right*!, are effective only **because these words have been** paired with other events that we like.

Because people have had different experiences, reinforcers are not always common to everyone. You may know a person who doesn't respond to smiles or praise. That doesn't mean that the person can't learn to think of smiles and praise as rewarding. It just means they haven't learned it yet. Teaching that person to like and want "praise," can be done by combining praise with things the person likes. This process may need to be repeated many times for some people.

How to Select Reinforcers

There is no such thing as a list of reinforcers that works for everyone. **What is reinforcing for one person may not be for another**. However, there are guidelines to use to find what each person prefers. There are four ways to find out what a person likes:

1. **Ask the person**. Develop a list of all the activities and objects that the person picks. It is important to double check whether or not these things will change the person's behavior. Even if I say I like to read Russian poetry, if being allowed to read it does not improve my behavior, it isn't a reinforcer.
2. **Ask others who know the person**. Sometimes others who know the person will be able to give ideas about what the person enjoys/values. Again, it is important to double check if these things will change the person's behavior.
3. **Observe the person.** (Preferred activity rule). The best way to select reinforcers is to observe the person's behavior. Make a list of activities he/she engages in **most of the time**. List activities in which he/she has a choice. In other words, when he/she is free to choose

from a number of things, list those chosen most often. These activities will be the best reinforcers.

4. **Try reinforcers that similar people enjoy.** If it isn't obvious what the person prefers, begin by trying reinforcers that people of the same age or gender enjoy. Again, it is important to double check if these things will change the person's behavior.

Using these methods will result in a list of possible reinforcers. You will discover some general things that most people like, i.e., sweets, praise, riding in the front seat of the car, etc. However, don't forget that each person will have things they like more than others.

Value-Based and Legal Considerations

If you follow these procedures, you will end up with a list that could be used when teaching. The list might look something like the one below for Ron, a 37-year-old man who lives in a group home:

- Colors in coloring books several times a day.
- Likes to talk about his favorite television shows.
- Goes bowling every chance he gets.
- Drinks 10-15 cups of coffee each day.
- Talks on the phone with his brother 4-5 times each week.
- Smokes a pipe most of the day.
- Seems to enjoy praise.
- Wears a toy gun constantly - when he is at home.
- Goes on a walk through the park almost every day.

Any one of the activities or items on the list might work as reinforcers for Ron. However, that doesn't mean they would be good to use in the teaching plan. There are legal issues that restrict our ability to use some objects or activities. Using them would be a violation of the person's legal rights. There are also value-based issues to consider.

Legal Issues

Everyone has legal rights that can't be withheld. Here are a few:

- Use of the mail.
- Use of the telephone.
- Access to visitors.
- Recreation.
- Going to church.
- Access to their own money.
- Personal clothing and possessions.
- Food and drink.
- Community access.

People do not <u>earn</u> the rights listed above. **Everyone has these rights unless they have been taken away or limited by a court of law.** For example:

> Teri, a resident in a group home, has only limited access to her personal money. She has lost her money and/or given it away to strangers several times. The court appointed someone to give Teri a weekly allowance. A teaching plan has been developed for Teri. It is hoped that in the future, she can handle her own money.

In this example, Teri's access to her money was restricted by the court or the team because there was proof that she was not responsible. Support teams sometimes recommend a restriction of rights, but before the restriction is implemented it is necessary to follow the agency's due process procedures. Usually that means a review by committees such as the Human Rights and/or Behavior Intervention Committee(s). Here's another example:

> *Jolene has to earn access to her money. She must do a variety of tasks and "stay out of trouble" to get her spending money. Jolene has never been known to misuse money.*

In this example, Jolene's right was restricted. She could only have her own money if she did certain things. The courts **have not** agreed with this type of restriction. Jolene hasn't mismanaged money AND the court has not taken that right away from her. Therefore, she should have access to her own money no matter what.

Most court decisions allow people to exercise as many rights as possible. Only when there is a danger to the person or others, will the court take such action. You might be asking: "Why is this an issue here? Doesn't reinforcement mean giving the person a preferred item or activity? How could this involve denial of a legal right?" Look at the following examples.

To Use or Not to Use?

Looks positive, doesn't it? Everyone who behaves correctly (runs three miles) will be reinforced (gets to eat breakfast.) Look at the same situation another way.

In other words, if you plan to use some object or activity as a reinforcer, you must also be able and willing to <u>deny</u> access to it. If a person can obtain the reinforcer without doing the behavior, the plan won't work.

For example: **The soldiers realized that they would still eat even if they did not run.** The drill sergeant's reinforcement plan won't work.

Keep this in mind when choosing reinforcers. Food, a bed, and bathroom privileges would work as reinforcers for most people. However it's not legal or ethical to deny a person's access to the bathroom, food, or sleep, if they don't behave correctly. Therefore, these activities or events cannot be used as reinforcers.

Anything that cannot or will not be denied should not be used as a reinforcer.

If the person can get the reinforcer without doing the behavior we want to increase, there is no reason to do what is asked.

Value-Based Issues

Just because we can legally use coloring books or toy guns to reinforce Ron, does that mean we should? We need to ask: How will these items affect the image of this person? Will it: a) enhance his image? b) not change his image? c) further devalue him? What will other people think about Ron? We need to use reinforcers that are desired by the person. But, we must pick ones which do not set the person apart as different. Here are two questions to ask when selecting reinforcers.

1. Does the reinforcer **match the person's age?** When an adult with ID, uses childlike items or engages in activities common for children, he is seen and treated like a child. Two of the preferred activities/items listed for Ron seem to fall in this category:

    - Colors in coloring books
    - Wears a toy gun constantly

Most adults do not spend much time coloring, and it is very rare to find someone 37 years old who wears a toy gun. Use of these two reinforcers could make people think less of Ron. It's true that some adults color. However, one of the greatest barriers persons with disabilities face is negative attitudes. It is best to avoid drawing attention to their differences. You might give a coworker some coloring books as a birthday present and others would know it's a joke. However, if person has ID, many people would not see the joke. It would confirm any belief that adults with ID are childlike. There is no strict rule against reinforcers that don't match the person's age. However, use these guidelines:

- When there are age-appropriate choices, use them.
- If there are no choices that match the person's age, try to substitute items or activities which are more age-appropriate. In Ron's case, "coloring books" that are meant to be used by adults are a good choice.

If we can't use either of these strategies, we might have to start with a reinforcer that doesn't match his age. However, we would gradually shift to a reinforcer that is similar to what other adults enjoy. For example, it's not unusual to begin by using reinforcers like fruit juice, if that is the only thing that works. If the skill or behavior is very important, we may start this way. However, as the person's learns to accept reinforcers that match his age, we will switch.
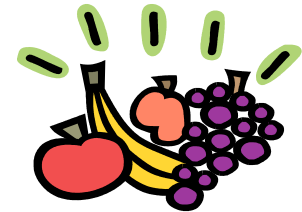
2. Is the reinforcer one that would **normally be used to reinforce this behavior?** Paying people with money for brushing their teeth or making their bed would be unusual. This type of reinforcer would make the learner appear very different. As you saw earlier, there are some times when you might use something not typical, but move as quickly as possible to adult activities or items. For example you might:

- Start using bites of fruit to reinforce a child during speech therapy. As soon as possible, stop using fruit and maintain the behavior with praise.

- Start with a point system to increase a person's production on the job and gradually reduce the use of points when the behavior is maintained by the paycheck.

3. Is the reinforcer one that is **normally used in this setting?** If people see unusual activities or items being used as reinforcers, it makes differences about the person more noticeable. Points would be viewed as normal for a school setting - money and bites of food would not.

NOTE: These are not absolute can or cannot do issues. Just keep in mind: "What will other people think about the persons when they see what we are using to reinforce?" **Use reinforcers which are strong enough to help the people do desired behaviors, but not devalue them.**

Reinforcement Errors

Sometimes we strengthen undesirable behavior accidentally. **If a reinforcer is provided, no matter what we intend, the behavior is likely to be increased.** The teacher's plan or goal does not determine whether a behavior will be strengthened. If a reinforcer follows an undesirable behavior, it is possible to <u>accidentally</u> reinforce a behavior.

The concept of accidental reinforcement is important in working with people with inappropriate behavior. Look at the following example:

James is rocking.

Teri tells James that it is time for his bath - one of his favorite activities.

James' rocking was probably strengthened. Teri didn't want to reinforce James for rocking. But she paid attention to him and offered to help him with his bath when he was rocking. She should have waited until he had stopped rocking to talk to him. Accidental reinforcement is hard to prevent. **But we must AVOID giving reinforcement after behaviors we are trying to REDUCE.**

Why Does He/She Do That?

Staff often find themselves wondering, why some people do things that others think are inappropriate (poorly chosen.) Take a look at this example:

Behavior occurs	"Reinforcer" is provided	Immediate effect:
Jolene complained and cried because someone used her hair dryer.	Jim consoled Jolene and gave her an ice cream cone.	The crying stopped.

The first two parts of the example fit the definition of reinforcement:

    (a) While **Jolene was crying**;
    (b) Jim consoled her and gave her an **ice cream cone** (something Jolene likes), but
    (c) Instead of crying more, **she stopped** crying.

It doesn't seem as though the third part of the definition, (strengthening the behavior), fits the example. However, remember that a **future increase** is the key. We must ask:

    (a) "What about crying tomorrow?"
    (b) Will Jolene be more likely to cry the next time someone uses something of hers?"

You probably agree that she is more likely to cry. Jolene learned that crying will receive attention and special treats.

Behavior occurs	"Reinforcer" is provided	Immediate effect:	Long Term: Behavior is strengthened
Jolene complained and cried because someone used her hair dryer.	Jim consoled Jolene and gave her an ice cream cone.	The crying stopped.	Crying increases

In other words, we cannot just look at the immediate effects--we must wait until the **same or similar situations occur again** to see whether the behavior has been strengthened (reinforced). **YOU MUST LOOK AT THE FUTURE OR LONG TERM EFFECTS ON BEHAVIOR.**

If the team asks, "Why does Jolene cry when people use her things," what would you tell them? Here is the correct answer: "Because that is what she has been taught." **Be careful NOT to reinforce behaviors you are trying to reduce.**

More Reinforcement Examples:

Behavior occurs	"Reinforcer" is provided	Behavior is strengthened
Brad doesn't work very hard, but one day staff noticed that he was making a real effort to clean his room.	Just as he finished, Marilyn walkedd over and helped him with his work. She continued to compliment his efforts.	Within a couple of weeks Brad **greatly improved his work habits.**
Teri, who often goofed off most of the day, was busily stacking boxes as they came off the assembly line.	The workshop staff praised Teri.	She **worked more consistently.**

Randa seemed to be cheerful most of the time. But at times she acted withdrawn and wouldn't talk to anyone.	Wade decided that he hadn't spent enough time with Randa. Each time she acted withdrawn, he talked with her for 15 minutes.	Over the next several weeks Randa was **withdrawn more often.**

REMEMBER: Reinforcement can also strengthen INAPPROPRIATE behavior.

Guidelines for Using Reinforcement

Immediate Reinforcement

If you want to strengthen a behavior, reinforce the behavior right after it occurs. In other words, immediately follow the behavior you wish to strengthen or increase with something the person likes. Immediate reinforcement is necessary for two reasons:

1. The closer in time the reinforcer is to the behavior, the more the behavior will be strengthened. If a supervisor waits to praise a worker till the end of the week or until he "has more time," it won't be as effective as if he had said something right after the positive behavior occurred. In order for people with ID to understand what they did right, reinforcement MUST be given immediately.
2. Another reason to reinforce right away can be seen in the following example.
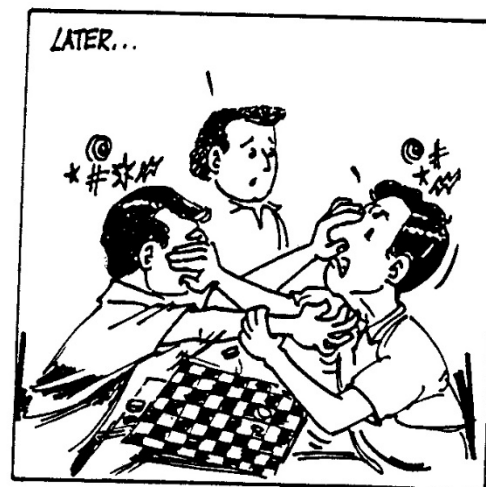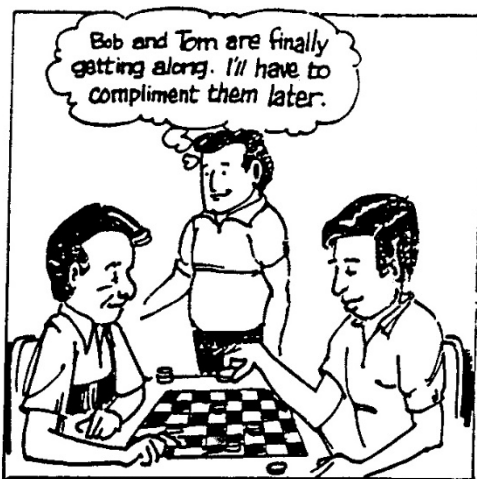
The staff person failed to reinforce the men for good behavior right away. When he came back, the men were fighting. If he talks to them when they are fighting, he risks <u>accidentally reinforcing</u> arguing and yelling. He missed an opportunity to reinforce. The only way to avoid this situation is to <u>reinforce immediately</u>.

REINFORCE IMMEDIATELY!!! The closer the reinforcer follows the behavior, the more the behavior is strengthened. If someone behaves poorly right before you reinforce him or her for something good they did earlier, then the undesired behavior will be increased. It doesn't matter whether you intend to or not, you will reinforce the wrong behavior.

Frequency of Reinforcement

Reinforcement for every correct response, is very important in teaching a new behavior. This provides feedback as to whether the behavior is correct and provides a reason to continue. Once the behavior has been learned and is happening frequently, then we can decrease how often we reinforce.

Think back to a time when you were learning to brush your teeth. You may recall that you were given almost constant praise at first. This frequent encouragement made you want to keep learning. As you got better at tooth brushing, you weren't praised as often.

When helping people learn, it is critical to **plan for fading reinforcement**. Unfortunately, if we fade too fast, the learner may lose interest. But, if reinforcement isn't faded, the learner will expect reinforcement every time they do the task. They might even think they are being punished when we start to reduce the amount of reinforcement. Waiting too long to fade may even cause the person stop performing the task. Deciding when to shift from reinforcing every response (continuous reinforcement) to less frequent (intermittent) reinforcement depends on the learner and the skill.

We can give reinforcement for:

- a certain number of behaviors or
- performing the behavior for a certain length of time.

For example, we could reinforce Ron for every bushel basket of apples he picked. Or, we could reinforce him every 30 minutes he is picking apples. These are both **predictable** schedules. Ron would know that after being reinforced, he would either have to pick another bushel basket or work another half hour before he could get reinforced. More than likely, Ron would rest or take a short break after getting reinforced.

If the possibility for reinforcement is less predictable, we see more steady behavior. Suppose Ron didn't know when he would get reinforced. It could be after 1 bushel or it might require filling 3 baskets. He might get reinforced 5 minutes after filling the basket or it might be closer to 60 minutes. Ron quickly learns that he needs to be working to get reinforced. **These unpredictable or variable plans for reinforcement, are better if we want to make sure the behavior will last.**

A good example of this type of reinforcement plan is gambling. Everybody who gambles knows that not everyone will be a winner or that he or she won't win all the time. However, somebody wins once in a while and that is enough to keep them gambling. A teacher who gives pop quizzes is using a variable schedule. The students never know when they might have an exam. They have to study every day, just in case the teacher gives an exam. A supervisor who stops in several times through out the week on an unannounced schedule is using a variable schedule. **We use variable reinforcement when the goal is to produce steady performance.**

General Rule: It usually takes frequent reinforcement to initially strengthen a new behavior. Later, to maintain a behavior, reinforce less often.

Note: More information on schedules of reinforcement is found in APPENDIX A and the Behavior Intervention modules. This material is supplemental for staff completing module requirements and required for staff pursuing credit for Special Education 221: Techniques of Behavior Intervention.

Selective Reinforcement

Selective reinforcement means that you **reinforce only the behavior(s) you wish to strengthen**. At the same time you **STOP reinforcing undesirable behaviors**. For example, you might (reinforce) an aggressive person whenever he talks nicely. However, if you were to also spend a lot of time criticizing him when he got into arguments, you could also be reinforcing aggressive behavior. Many people are surprised that criticism could be reinforcing. But if the person receives attention for both good and bad behaviors, learning desired behaviors will be delayed.

Example: Tom was trying to help Brad learn to buckle his belt. She knew she must first teach Brad to watch him as he buckled his belt so Brad could learn to do what Tom did. To teach Brad to watch Tom buckle is belt, Tom immediately praised Brad and gave him a bite of cereal each time he looked at Tom's belt. Even though Tom always did it that way, he noticed that Brad still spent a lot of time looking away from him. He also did other less desired behaviors. Tom constantly had to prompt Brad and tell him to stop and watch him buckle his belt. What could be wrong with Tom's teaching plan?

Answer: Even though Tom did reinforce Brad each time he looked at Tom's belt, Tom also gave too much attention to Brad when he looked away. In other words, **Tom was reinforcing Brad's desired behavior (watching him), while at the same time he was accidentally reinforcing behaviors which interfered with looking at his belt.** To correct this problem, Tom has to be more selective. He must ignore Brad when he looks away or misbehaves while he continues to reinforce Brad when he looks at Tom's belt.

Shaping
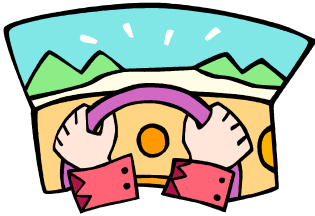
Suppose you had never driven a car and someone asked you to drive in an emergency. You might not be able to drive on such short notice. However, if you were able to take a class and practice, you could learn how to drive. As a beginning driver, no one would ask you to drive in New York City traffic during rush hour. The teacher would start by letting you drive on a deserted country road. A good teacher would help build your confidence with praise for your progress. Your desire to drive where you want would keep you motivated to learn. Gradually as you got better at driving, you would be given more difficult routes until you could drive anywhere.

The same principle applies when helping people with ID learn new skills. Even with prompts and reinforcement, some people may have great difficulty learning. The teacher can't wait to give reinforcement until the task is done perfectly. In order for the person to learn, the teacher must reinforce behavior, even if the person performance is a lot less than perfect. Gradually the teacher will expect better performance before reinforcement is given. This process is called **shaping**. Shaping is used when:

a. The person does not do the skill or task, even if given help; or
b. The person displays a form of the behavior, but it needs improvement.

Points To Remember When Using Shaping

Teaching begins with a behavior the person can already perform. Gradually the person is expected to perform better. The only way to find out where to start is to watch the person. For example, think about helping Sue learn to ride an exercise bike for 30 minutes a day. Perhaps Sue won't even go in the room where the exercise bike is stored. If you were using shaping to help her learn, you would start by reinforcing Sue for going close to the room. Then you would require her to actually go in the room. Gradually, you would expect more and more, until Sue actually got on the bike. Next you would reinforce her for riding for a short while, and gradually expect longer bike rides. If Sue failed any one of the steps as you expected more from her, you would need to go back to the previous level so that she can continue to be successful. When Sue meets your expectations again, you can increase what you expect of her.

No News is Good News*

It's a good idea to use reinforcement which is as "normal" as possible. There aren't very many situations where people receive constant reinforcers for correctly completing each tiny step of a task. When a person is learning a task they find fun or interesting, the task provides it's own motivation. The teacher doesn't have praise for every step of progress. The teacher can watch, prompt and correct errors. **If the task itself is motivating to the learner, the teacher doesn't need to "reinforce" for success at each tiny step.**

This approach is referred to by some as "no news is good news." As long as the person is performing the task correctly, no verbal or physical feedback is provided by the teacher. Correctly completing each step is feedback enough. By applying the concept of "no news is good news," you are helping the person learn more "normal" reinforcement routines which will allow the person to function in more settings.

*(Adapted from the "Try Another Way Approach" by Marc Gold and Associates, 1980.)

CAUTION: Many tasks may not be interesting to learn. In these cases, the "no news is good news" approach is not appropriate. You must match your approach to each task and each person.

Teacher/Learner Relationship

Before leaving this, it is important to note that there is nothing that says that every pleasant event has to be earned. Positive behaviors and learning are more likely to occur when people are happy, having fun, and feel good about themselves. Most unwanted behavior occurs in a vacuum, where positive contacts are lacking.

We have a choice when assisting people to learn. For example, compare the following prompts, "If we hurry, we can get the dishes done before Wheel of Fortune starts. Do you want to wash or dry?" with "If you don't do the dishes, you can't watch Wheel of Fortune." If you only spend time with people when it is time to do boring or distasteful tasks, they will avoid you as much as the disliked activities. Find ways to spend time doing things people enjoy. Surprise people with pleasant events and catch them being good. Good teachers build their relationships based on respect for the people they are assisting (Fruehling, 1993.)

Lesson 8: Feedback Exercise

1. The only people who don't have "behaviors" are _____.
2. Our goal is to help people _____ behaviors that help them.
3. A reinforcer is something the person likes well enough to _____.
4. What is the difference between a reward and reinforcement?
5. (True/False). It is a mistake to try to give the person a reinforcer even if they don't do the behavior.
6. The principle of reinforcement can be used to
   a.
   b.
   c.
7. List the three parts of reinforcement
   a.
   b.
   c.
8. Explain what is meant by "the next time the same situation arises; the behavior is more likely to occur."
9. It's always best to use _____ as reinforcers, if the person finds them reinforcing.
10. _____ (True/False) Everyone has items, events or activities that will reinforce them.
11. Because people have had different experiences, reinforcers _____(are/are not) always common to everyone.

12. Each of the following paragraphs is a description of a situation in which a behavior is or is not reinforced. Read the descriptions and then decide whether the behavior was reinforced. You will be provided with several questions to help make your decision. **You must answer Yes to all three questions or the description is not an example of reinforcement.**

The behavior to look at is: **Helen sitting quietly**. Several people were watching TV. Helen had been making a lot of noise and generally bothering the other people. She quieted down for a few moments. Jose quickly walked over and said enthusiastically, "Look at Helen, she sure knows how to sit quietly." Helen sat quietly for a moment but then began to yell again, and finally she was asked to leave the TV room. She was also generally disruptive for the next several nights.
- Did the behavior occur?
- Did a consequence immediately follow the behavior? Describe the consequence.
- Did the behavior increase in frequency?
- Is this an example of reinforcement?

The behavior to look at is: **Art sitting alone**. Instead of interacting with other people, Art often sat alone in the corner of the living room. Philip, the home manager, decided that maybe Art just needed more attention. So each time he saw Art sitting alone, he sat down and talked with him - encouraging him to join in the group activities. However, Philip eventually stopped the "talks" because instead of interacting with others, Art seemed to spend more and more time sitting alone.

- Did the behavior occur?
- Did a consequence immediately follow the behavior? Describe the consequence.
- Did the behavior increase in frequency?
- Is this an example of reinforcement?

The behavior to look at is: **Henry quickly completing his work assignment.** Even though Henry usually finished his work assignment each day, Mary (his supervisor) knew that he could work faster. One day when Henry finished his assignment more quickly than usual, she told him he could leave work early since he had finished. Mary observed Henry over the next week or so but he didn't seem to work any faster.
- Did the behavior occur?
- Did a consequence immediately follow the behavior? Describe the consequence.
- Did the behavior increase in frequency?
- Is this an example of reinforcement?

The behavior to look at is: **Larry arguing.** Larry usually got along well with the other people, but every once in a while he got involved in loud arguments with the workshop staff. Since this was not a very appropriate behavior, the staff members decided to discipline Larry by criticizing him when he got involved in an argument. The criticism procedure was only that he should not argue, that it was wrong, etc. The criticism procedure was only partially effective. If Larry was arguing and they criticized him, he usually stopped. However, they noticed that he seemed to be involved in more arguments than ever.
- Did the behavior occur?
- Did a consequence immediately follow the behavior? Describe the consequence.
- Did the behavior increase in frequency?
- Is this an example of reinforcement?

> CAUTION: Do not be misled by this exercise. Single instances of reinforcement do not usually result in dramatic changes in behavior. Usually consistent reinforcement over time is necessary to make significant changes in behavior.

13. Below we have reprinted the list of potential reinforcers for John Blake. Refer to the discussion on legal issues to determine whether some of the items on the list should be eliminated because their use as reinforcers could be a violation of John's legal rights. In the space provided below each item, indicate whether the item should be eliminated and briefly describe the reasons for your decision. (Assume that John is a legally competent adult--he does not have a guardian.) Compare your answers with the feedback answers. List of preferred activities/items:
- Likes to talk about his favorite television shows.
- Drinks 10 to 15 cups of coffee each day.
- Talks on the telephone with his brother four or five times each week.
- Smokes a pipe most of the day.
- Goes bowling every chance he gets.
- Seems to enjoy praise and positive feedback.

- Wears a toy gun constantly when he is at the residence.
- Goes on a walk through the neighborhood and park almost every day.

14. If a person doesn't find social rewards like praise, attention, smiles, and pats on the back, reinforcing, what can be done?
15. What are some ways to find out what is reinforcing to an individual?
16. People do not _____ legal rights. Everyone has these rights unless they have been taken away or limited by a court of law.
17. List at least five things that cannot be used for a reinforcer because they cannot be legally withheld. The person has a legal right to the item or event.
18. How does accidental reinforcement occur?
19. Define immediate reinforcement.
20. Describe two reasons why it is desirable to use immediate reinforcement.
21. Once a behavior has been strengthened, reinforcement can be_____
22. _____ reinforcement is important when teaching a new behavior.
23. Describe the role of frequent reinforcement: (a) in the acquisition of a new behavior; (b) to maintain an already learned behavior.
24. Describe selective reinforcement. Describe its major purpose.
25. Describe the "no news is good news" concept. When is it used?
26. Define the teaching technique called shaping.
27. Shaping is used when
    a.
    b.
28. Read the following examples. In the space provided, write how you might use shaping to solve the problem.
    a. Frank almost never finishes his meal. He's losing weight and it's beginning to affect his health. How might you teach Frank to finish his meal?
       Wrong Way - Wait for Frank to complete an entire meal, then reinforce him. You may have a long wait.
       Right Way?
    b. Carla has trouble finishing her work assignments. She usually quits without completing her work.
       Wrong Way - Require Carla to fully complete every work assignment before she can be reinforced.
       Right Way?
    c. Joan almost never interacts appropriately with other people. She is very "bossy" and often argues with other people. She received a lot of criticism for this kind of behavior and it was probably one of the reasons she didn't have very many friends. Pat tried to make a positive approach in helping Joan with her problem. She explained to Joan that her bossy behavior was unacceptable, and that she wanted to help her learn how to get along with other residents. Instead of focusing on Joan's inappropriate behavior, Pat attempted to strengthen or increase Joan's appropriate social interactions. How might Pat help Joan learn to get along well with other people?
       Wrong Way - Pat might wait for Joan to behave perfectly without being bossy, then she could reinforce her.
       Right Way?

Lesson 9: Extinction (Planned Ignoring)

OBJECTIVES:

- Define extinction.
- Explain when to use extinction.
- Describe guidelines for using extinction.
- Describe the effects of extinction on behavior.
- Describe the criticism trap and explain why it should be avoided.

Sometimes people we support do things that aren't in their best interest. They may talk too loud or too much. Or, they may get up from their work area and bother other people. Sometimes we think that the best way to change these behaviors is the do something to the person that will make them change. We think doing something the person doesn't like (criticizing them or sending them to another room or taking something away from them) will change their behavior. We have learned that these approaches are not the best. One of the reasons they aren't good is that they make the staff person the "bad guy". This way of treating people is also not very respectful. A better approach is to use the methods discussed earlier to help the person learn a new and better way to get what they want (attention, activities, or things). Sometimes, until the person learns the new skill or way to get what they want, we need to stop giving attention when the person does the behavior we want to change. This teaching method is called extinction.

Extinction: Withholding Reinforcement

Extinction is used to decrease problem behaviors. Extinction limits the reinforcer(s) for a specific behavior. Many problem behaviors have been learned because they have been reinforced in the past. Usually "attention" is the reinforcer the person is trying to get. For example:

1. Mary Beth sometimes paces up and down the hall. She goes back and forth until someone sits down and talks with her (reinforcer). She gets a lot more attention when she paces than when she doesn't.
2. Bruce looks messy most of the time. His friends often make fun of the way he looks (possible reinforcer), but it doesn't seem to do any good. However, when he does look nice, no one says much about it.
3. Joan often refuses to eat. Sometimes begging her to eat (reinforcer) works, but often staff have to sit by her during the entire meal (reinforcer.)
4. Alex often is "bossy." He has learned to behave this way because when he bosses, he gets his own way (reinforcer.)

All of these behaviors were learned. Getting your own way and attention (even criticism), are reinforcing to most people. These behaviors could be reduced by extinction. The person needs to learn that he or she will no longer get attention from this behavior. If reinforcement is

withheld for the problem behavior (extinction) they will learn. But, reinforcement must also be provided for desired behaviors. The person has to be taught what to do instead of the problem behavior. They need a way to get what they want. We need to find a better way for them to get attention or have other needs met.

In order to use an extinction procedure you have to be able to do the following:

1. Find out what is maintaining the behavior. Why does the problem behavior occur? What does the person get from it? The answers will tell us what is reinforcing the behavior.
2. Make sure that the reinforcers no longer follow the problem behavior.

To identify the reinforcers maintaining the behavior, you look at what happens after the behavior. You try to find out what might be serving as reinforcers. Look at the examples below:

Behavior occurs	"Reinforcer" is provided	Behavior is strengthened
Child cries in the grocery store check out line.	Mother buys a treat.	The next time they are shopping the child cries while waiting in line.
Tom cuts in front of Bill in the lunch line.	Tom gets to eat first, and Bill yells at him for cutting in line.	The next day Tom cuts in front of Sue and Bill.
Gwen and Pam are arguing over whose turn it is.	Gwen's mother stops what she is doing in the kitchen to tell them to play nice.	Gwen's mother is busy in the kitchen. Gwen and Pam start fighting over who gets the TV remote.

To decrease problem behavior, we have to eliminate the reinforcement. For example:
- To decrease crying, the mother will have to stop buying treats when the child cries at the grocery store.
- To decrease arguing, Gwen's mother will have to attend as little as possible to Gwen and Pam when they are arguing and pay attention to them when they are playing nicely.

If we get rid of the reinforcers, the person will eventually stop the problem behavior. If the "cause" is no longer available, there is no reason to continue.

What Happens When a Behavior is Put on Extinction?

1. **Don't be surprised if the behavior problem gets worse before it gets better**. At first, you may notice an increase in the problem behavior. This is quite normal and logical. For example, Kari "bothers others" a lot. When you begin to ignore this behavior, it is possible that she will "bother others" even more. In the past when people tried to ignore "bothering", if Kari kept it up, people gave in. It may look like it is getting worse at first. It's

very normal and you should expect that she would increase her "bothering". BE CONSISTENT.

2. Look for a gradual decrease in the problem behavior. It probably took a while for the person to learn the problem behavior. It will also take time for the person to learn better behaviors.

Guidelines for Using Extinction

1. **Pick a new behavior to reinforce while the problem behavior is placed on extinction**. Your procedure will work better if you find out what skill(s) the person is lacking. Lack of skills is very often the cause for problem behavior. Help the person learn the missing skill instead. For example: If you were trying to decrease "complaining" by not paying attention to it, you should also reinforce when they aren't complaining. By doing so, you will help the person learn a better way to get attention. If attention is given to the new skill (i.e., social skills that aren't complaining), it tells the person attention is still available. However attention is available only when not complaining.

2. **Be consistent**. If an individual sometimes gains attention for the behavior, and other times is ignored, the extinction plan will not work. In fact, it may make the problem behavior stronger.

3. Remember: **Only the person's problem behavior is on extinction. The person is not ignored, only the behavior.** Many people often make the mistake of ignoring the person, no matter what he or she does. If, for example, you wanted to decrease Jim's bizarre comments, you would try not to pay attention to him when he was speaking in a bizarre manner. However, when he talks normally, give lots of attention. A written plan tells staff exactly what they should or shouldn't do while ignoring the behavior. **There is a huge difference between "plain ignoring" and "planned ignoring."** There should be lots of chances for the person to get attention other ways.

The Criticism Trap
For many people, any attention - even criticism - is a reinforcer. Look at these examples:

In the first frame, Alexis is complaining. People usually pay attention to complaining. Here the staff person told her to be quiet. Whether it seems logical or not, criticism is a reinforcer for complaining. When the person doesn't get attention for more positive behaviors, they will seek attention, even criticism. Because of the attention others give her, Alexis will keep on complaining.

What about problem behaviors you can't ignore? It would be neglect to ignore fighting or self abuse if people will get hurt. Even if you must stop the behavior, try to not make a "big deal" out of it. Making a "big deal" gives the person too much attention. If you need to talk with the person, wait until later.

You Can't Always Use Extinction

We can't use extinction for all behaviors. If you can't prevent reinforcement, extinction won't work. Many behaviors have "automatic" reinforcement. What if Harry should be cleaning his room, but he is watching TV instead? Not paying attention to him will not make him stop watching TV. In other words, you can't just ignore all problem behaviors. The best way to decrease a behavior with its own reinforcement is to make sure the person will get something they want more for doing the desired behavior. For example, you might provide special activities for Harry if he does his chores. He may find that it's fun to watch TV, but more fun to go on a special trip if his room is clean.
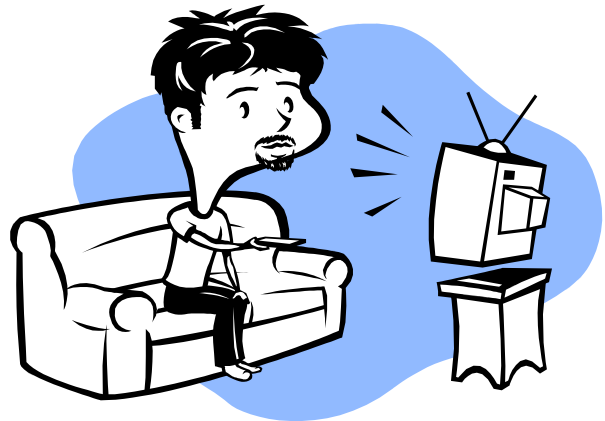
Summary

Many problem behaviors have been learned. People gain attention (a reinforcer) from others for misbehavior. They escape from work situations (a reinforcer) by acting upset. Extinction is a natural part of life. It can be used to decrease behavior. When using extinction to decrease a behavior, you should be helping the person learn a better behavior to take its place. Extinction removes the reason for the behavior (attention) and makes it possible to learn new, better skills.

Lesson 9: Feedback Exercise

1. Define extinction.

2. Explain when extinction procedures are good teaching methods.

3. Explain two prerequisites which must be met to use an extinction procedure.

4. List and describe the guidelines for using an extinction procedure.

5. Describe what happens to a behavior when extinction is used.

6. Describe the criticism trap and explain why it should be avoided. Explain how to break the vicious cycle which perpetuates the criticism trap.

7. Below are two examples which involve someone who is possibly being reinforced for inappropriate behavior. Read each example and see if you can identify the potential reinforcer. Also, write down how you would use an extinction procedure to decrease the frequency of the inappropriate behavior.

   Randy frequently leaves his work station. His supervisor has to constantly prompt him to pay attention and keep working. After the supervisor leaves, Randy usually works for a short while but soon leaves his work station and bothers other employees. The supervisor usually has to come back and ask him to start working again.

   a. Potential reinforcer for not working?

   b. Describe a possible extinction procedure.

   Maria often cries if she has to dress herself. When this happens, someone usually dresses her so she will not be so upset.

   c. Potential reinforcer for crying?

   d. Describe a possible extinction procedure.

Lesson 10: Helping People Learn New Skills

OBJECTIVES:

- Design a teaching program for a person with intellectual disabilities.

Introduction

One option for helping people achieve personal outcomes is to assist them to learn new skills. Almost everyone with ID, will need to learn skills to help them live on their own. This lesson will teach you how to design teaching programs.

Developing a Teaching Plan (Sometimes called a Protocol).

This lesson introduces you to a process for planning to teach a new behavior. * The first four steps must be completed before beginning any teaching. The last three steps are a means of improving the teaching plan if it isn't working.

* The basic strategy described in this lesson was adapted from a variety of different publications all of which were produced by Marc Gold & Associates, Inc., P.O. Box 5100, Austin, TX 78763.

Steps for Teaching

1. Method (how the task will be done)
2. Task analysis (steps to do the task)
3. Plans for assisting during learning
4. Plans for error correction during learning
5. Teaching the skill

If the person doesn't learn the skill:

6. Revise the kind and amount of assistance during learning

If the person still doesn't learn the skill:

7. Redo Task Analysis (steps of the task)

If the person still doesn't learn the skill:

8. Figure out a different way to do the task

1. **Method:** Describe how the person will do the skill or task. Tell how well you expect the person to do the skill or task and how much help will be provided. Describe any special equipment or conditions important to teaching.
   Example: The person may need to be able to:

        a. assemble something
        b. put name on a check
        c. put on a shirt, etc.
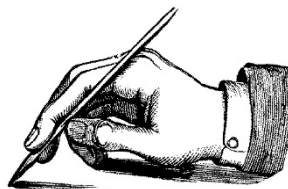
There are many ways for completing most tasks. The person who needs a way to put his name on a check could:

- Write it
- Type it
- Use a template that allows him to follow the line with a pen
- Stamp it with a stamp pad

After choosing the method the learner will use, we must describe any **special conditions** under which the task will occur. The conditions include when, where, amount of help, and special equipment available to the learner. Be sure to consider any learning needs of the person. You must also describe **how well or how long the person will complete the task**. (See Appendix B and the training module, *Writing Behavioral Objectives and Measuring Behavior* for detailed instructions on writing behavioral objectives.)

2. Task Analysis: Divide the method into a sequence of teachable steps.

This step involves breaking the task into a list of small teachable steps. The task analysis refers only to the steps the learner will perform; it does not describe what the staff will do. Two factors determine how many teaching steps to use.

a. The difficulty of the task.
b. The learning needs of the person.

Remember:
a. The more complex the task ... the greater the number of teaching steps.
b. The greater the person's learning needs ... the greater the number of teaching steps.

3. Teaching Plan. Explain how to assist when teaching.

Because many different staff may be involved in teaching the skill, it is important that they all teach the new skill the same way. Describe everything the staff will do to teach the task. You will need to apply the information from Lesson 3 on how people with ID learn.

- Explain the **sequence** for presenting the steps to the learner. You may decide to present the entire sequence in order, from beginning to end (forward chaining.) However, some tasks are better presented by teaching the last step first (backward chaining.)

- Describe the **assistance** (prompts) to use. Will verbal prompts, gestures, or physical guidance be used? You must decide how prompts will be used at first when the learner knows very little about the task. In addition, you should tell how the prompts will be faded as the person learns.

- Describe what the teacher will do to **reinforce the learner** when the desired skill or behavior occurs. How often will the behavior be reinforced? What will be used for reinforcement?

- Finally, tell what the teacher should do **if the person doesn't do the skill** or behavior correctly. Should the teacher correct the person? If so, how? Should undesirable behaviors be ignored? If so, tell exactly which behaviors should be ignored.

4. Teach: Carry out the teaching plan.

Example: A plan for teaching a person to wash his or her hands might look something like this.

Method: The learner will stand in front of the sink. A bar of soap, paper towels in a dispenser on the wall, and a wastepaper basket will be provided. The sink has two handles (one hot, one cold), and one spout. Ultimately, we expect the person to wash her hands without error or assistance. Teaching will be done two times per day, seven days a week.

Task Analysis: After doing the task several times this task analysis was written:

1. Stand facing the sink.
2. Push up sleeves.
3. Place hands on both water faucets.
4. Turn faucet handles one quarter turn, until the water is warm, and the stream is steady but not splashing over sink.
5. Pick up soap with hand closest to soap.
6. Place both hands under stream of water to wet soap and wet hands to wrist.
7. Remove hands and soap from under stream of water, but hold them over sink.
8. Rub both hands palms facing each other, with soap between, to make lather.
9. Place soap on sink edge.
10. Scrub hands to cover with lather.
11. Spread fingers apart and bring hands together until fingers interlock.
12. Rub inner spaces between fingers, until covered with lather.
13. Place both hands under stream of water to remove lather.
14. Rinse lather off palms, hands, and wrists.
15. Interlock fingers and rinse between fingers until lather is rinsed away.
16. Turn off water.
17. Grasp paper towel.
18. Wipe water off palms, hands, and wrists until dry.
19. Place used paper towel in wastepaper container.

Teaching Plan

Teaching Sequence: The learner will go forward through each step of the task analysis.
Assistance Procedures: Use the following assists (prompts) in the order listed:

- Verbal cues.
- Point if needed.
- Show how to do the step.
- Physically assist the learner's hands partially through a step.
- Physically assist the learner's hands to completion of step.

  Reinforcement: When the desired behavior occurs, say "Good" and/or pat on the back.
  Errors: If a step is done incorrectly, tell or show the correct step and follow correct completion with reinforcement.

Implement the teaching plan. Provide frequent practice as identified in the plan. Monitor the person's progress. If the person has trouble learning or if you are unsure of how to teach, contact the QDDP, Program Coordinator, or your supervisor.

5. Re-do the Teaching Plan: If the person does not learn after consistent and frequent practice, the next step would be to decide how to improve the plan. Are there parts of the plan which could be strengthened or redesigned. Are there prompts that might work better for this person? Are more powerful reinforcers required? Does the learner have a high rate of problem behaviors that prevent him from practicing and learning? Is the task analysis organized well for this person. Would backward chaining work better?

6. Re-do the Task Analysis: If after making the above changes the person still did not learn, you may have to re-do the task analysis. Usually, you would re-do the task analysis by breaking some or all of the teaching steps into smaller more easy to teach steps. Keep in mind however, that your goal should be to use as few teaching steps as possible and still have the person learn.

7. Re-do the Method: If after making the above changes, the person still did not learn, it would be necessary to find another way to do the skill. Maybe an air blower will be needed if the person just can't get their hands dry with a paper towel.

Lesson 10: Feedback Questions

You are assigned the responsibility helping JoLynn, an individual with intellectual disabilities, learn how to mop the floor. Design a plan to assist JoLynn to learn the instructional objective listed below:

> JoLynn will mop the floor of the dishwashing room at her job, completing all the steps in the task analysis independently, for nine of ten consecutive trials.

1. Give a detailed description of the teaching procedures you would use with JoLynn. Include the steps in the task analysis, the prompts, and the reinforcement.

    Task Analysis:

    Will it be taught forward chaining or backward chaining?

    What prompts will be used?

    What is your plan for fading your assistance?

    What should the teacher do if the person doesn't do the skill or behavior correctly? Should the teacher correct the person? If so, how? Tell what the teacher should do if undesirable behaviors occur.

    What will you use for reinforcement? How often will she be reinforced?

    What is your plan for fading reinforcement?

2. If JoLynn has trouble learning how to mop the floor using the teaching procedure you described above, what are some suggestions you might make to the rest of the team?

Lesson 11: Strengthening an Existing Skill

OBJECTIVES:

- Design a teaching plan to strengthen an existing skill.

Introduction

In Lesson 10 the emphasis was on teaching a NEW skill. However, often people with ID have skills that need to be improved. Sometimes the person needs to increase how often they do a skill. Other times they need to improve how well or how fast they do the skill.

Look at the following examples:

> *"Jose doesn't do self care habits as often as he should. He brushes his teeth only 2 or 3 times a week, and he almost never bathes."*
> *"Barb does quality work, but the number of items she completes is too low."*
> *"Mike gets along well with other people at home, but he argues and fights with others at work."*
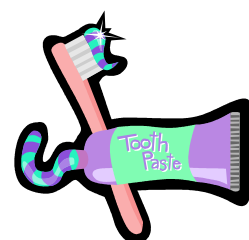
Jose can brush his teeth and bathe. Barb can do quality work. Mike knows how to get along, but he fights with the other workers. The problem in each of these examples is the number or quality of a current behavior.

Increasing the Strength of a Behavior

Five steps should be included in a plan to strengthen an already existing skill.

1. **Describe the skill.** Describe how the person will do the skill. Tell how well they are expected to do the skill and how much help will be provided. Describe any special equipment or conditions used when teaching.

2. **Develop a way to measure how often the behavior occurs now.** Pick a method that fits the skill. Several methods are described in the "Writing Behavioral Objectives and Measuring Behavior" training module. Use the information to pick the best data recording tool for this behavior.

   Baseline Data: Determine the current rate. This is referred to as taking a baseline. This baseline will help determine how to teach. It will help the teacher know if the person is learning. There is no "rule of thumb" regarding how long to take baseline data. Take data until you feel sure that you know how often the behavior occurs.

NOTE: You don't always have to collect "new" baseline data. When working with some behaviors you will already have information in staff notes. This data can be used to create a "baseline." For instance, if the problem is "Mary runs away from home," staff notes should tell how often the behavior occurs. The notes will also tell what is going on when she runs.

When you look at the baseline data, it should give you a good idea of where, when, and how often the behavior occurs.

3. **Develop a teaching plan.** There is no formula for designing a teaching plan to strengthen a skill. However, there are key things to consider, including:

    a. **Use the best reinforcers for the person.** Reinforcers should be chosen because the learner likes them. It's also important to use reinforcers that don't draw negative attention to the learner. The age of the learner is an important factor in selecting reinforcers. Use reinforcers that naturally occur in the situation. If conditions require the use of another type of reinforcer (such as the use of food in a work setting,) include a plan for moving to natural reinforcer(s) as the skill improves.

    b. **Immediate reinforcement.** A teaching plan starts by giving reinforcers right after the behavior. Later, after the behavior improves, delays that are normal to the situation, (such as being paid only at the end of the work week) may be used.

    c. **Frequency of reinforcement.** In the beginning the teacher should reinforce at the learner's current level, or with only slight improvement. As the person's skill improves, the number or quality of responses required can be lengthened. At first it may be necessary to use a frequent reinforcement to quickly strengthen the behavior. However, there should be a plan for gradually changing the frequency to be what is normal for other people the same age.

4. **Develop a plan for controlling behaviors that interfere with the skill to be strengthened.** If the team thinks that the low rate or quality of the desired skill is due to another problem behavior, a teaching plan to decrease the undesirable behavior may be needed. This program should be carried out at the same time as the plan for strengthening the desired behavior(s).

5. **Design a plan for reviewing the progress.** The plan should specify:
    a. Who will collect the data and when.
    b. Who will analyze and plot the data.
    c. Who will review the data and when.
    d. Under what conditions the plan will be modified.
        - If not successful after "X" amount of time
        - If successful, what next?

Appendix A: Feedback Answers

Lesson 1 Feedback Answers

Answers will vary. Discuss your answers with your supervisor or trainer.

1. supports and services
2. Personal Outcomes
3. This belief will have a huge effect on the way we assist the person. If the service system shares in responsibility for the person's success or failure, every avenue for success will be explored.
4. how each person learns best and what:
   - is important to him/her.
   - he or she enjoys (and hates).
   - skills or attributes he/she has.
   - excites, scares, or motivates him/her.
5. legal rights; human dignity
6. Sometimes it's possible to discover Personal Outcomes by talking with a person. Or, you can watch what they do and how they look and act during daily activities. The self-assessment process helps get to know the person and his/her unique goals.
7. to bridge the gap between where a person is now and where they want to be. This information is used to select ways to overcome barriers that are keeping the person from reaching his/her goals.
8. A.   One possibility is an alarm on her bedroom door that would alert the foster parents that she is up at night.
   B.   Possible answers include: a phone call from staff to ensure he is up; temporary morning staff to help him learn a morning routine to get to work on time.
   C.   Possible answers include: finding an accessible apartment that both Tom and Bud like; working with Bud's mom to find out the source of her objections; finding another roommate who has an accessible apartment.

Lesson 2 Feedback Answers

1. Saying a person with a significant disability must learn some type of behavior before they can move to a more integrated living arrangement, get a job, etc., is often equivalent to sentencing them to remain where they are -- if not indefinitely, at least for a very long time.
2. gain more independence; a more typical community member.
3. supportive services
4. people (staff); adaptations; equipment and devices
5. usually
6. It is important to find the strategy that will assist the person to "blend" into the setting as much as possible. Being accepted and included frequently depends on how much a person is thought to be just like everyone else.
7. less

8. Answers will vary. Discuss your answers with your supervisor or trainer. Some possible answers are listed below:
   a. walking; riding the bus; catching a ride with a coworker or staff
   b. automatic deductions from bank account; staff to assist with bill paying
   c. speaking; communication board; communication book; nodding head; gestures

Lesson 3 Feedback Answers

1. learning
2. b
3. b, c, f, g
4. direct support workers
5. There are times when it is very important to "do for" a person. In an emergency, staff may have to provide more assistance than teaching. When a person has very complex needs, the team may decide that there are certain skills that aren't as important for teaching right now. The team will often recommend that these activities be done for a person for now, because he or she is learning other, more pressing skills.
6. Providing the correct supports for each person is easier when staff share information with each other. People, who have a great deal to learn, require good teachers. They don't have time to waste on teaching methods that won't work for them. It's also much more rewarding and motivating for staff to see progress and watch people reach goals.
7. actual setting; actual materials
8. difficult
9.
   - Control things that interfere with learning.
   - Turn off the TV or radio, move to a spot where there are less people, clear the area of extra tools or materials, and close the door if necessary.
   - Wait until the person is looking at the task before beginning to teach.
   - Help the person understand why they are being asked to do something.
   - Point out the important parts of a task and differences that help a person remember.
   - Give only one instruction at a time.
   - Keep instructions brief, focusing on what you want the person to do.
10.
    - Keep the time between teaching sessions short. New skills have to be practiced frequently (at least daily.)
    - Rather than asking questions which require the person to recall an answer, help them choose the answer from a list you give.
    - Use prompts like pictures and actual objects to help the person understand your questions and remember important information.
    - If the person can't answer an open-ended question, provide a list.
11. true

12. Use task analysis, or step-by-step lists, for helping people learn complex tasks. The number of steps in a task analysis depends on the task and the learning needs of the person being taught. All teachers should be consistent in how they use the list of steps. Everyone should use the same words, the same steps, in the same order, and the same materials when the person is just learning. People with ID also need support with rehearsal strategies, or ways to remember new facts. Assist the person to learn simple remembering strategies and help them learn when to use the strategies.
13. True
14. Many adults with intellectual disabilities have difficulty understanding cause and effect because of memory difficulties and because they can't think abstractly. In order to learn, they need others to take time to point out what they did (action) and the results (success or problems created by their actions.
15. teacher(s).
16. People who don't have intellectual disabilities have a range of coping strategies. They are flexible and able to adapt to new situations, changes, and problems. People with intellectual disabilities, on the other hand, rely on learned habits for coping. They often don't have a Plan B when the usual way doesn't work.
17. It helps to prepare people with ID for situations that are new or unfamiliar.
    - Talking about what to expect, sometimes helps people relax.
    - Help them make the unfamiliar more familiar.
    - Help people learn routines so they will feel safe.
    - Take someone or something familiar along.
    - Help people learn and practice some Plan B strategies.
    - Avoid down time and waiting if that is hard for the person.
    - If possible, protect people from things that overwhelm them. The team can work on helping the person to tolerate the situation, but until then, find a way to avoid upsetting them if possible.
18. True
19.
    - Use words the person will understand.
    - Keep sentences short. Give one direction at a time.
    - Practice using language that everyone agrees the person will understand.
    - Be cautious whenever using pronouns (I, me, you, they) or prepositions (under, over, above) as these are difficult for many people with intellectual disabilities.
    - Help people with intellectual disabilities learn the words they don't understand during routine activities.
    - If a person has trouble understanding time concepts, only talk about what is in the here and now. Have the person watch the clock and count the minutes, if trying to help him learn to wait.
    - When giving instructions check frequently to see if the person understands. However, avoid asking yes or no questions to check for understanding, people are often eager to please staff and may answer questions the way they think you want them to do so. Instead have the person show you or tell you what they understand you have said.

Lesson 4 Feedback Answers

1. When learners trust the teacher and believe that the teacher cares about them, learning improves.
2. Spend time doing things the person likes to do; when possible, help the person to avoid things that are disliked; learn to communicate well with each other.
3. does not
4. Engaging activities are those that the person finds fun, appealing, and interesting. The person chooses the activity because they like it.
5. Choice, fun, and excitement
   a. Choice gives a person a sense of control or empowerment. Control means increased self-worth, self-esteem, and commitment to the task. The learning task is more motivating when the learner selects it. Even if there are many things that a person enjoys, we may only want to offer two or three things at one time. If the list of options is too big or wide open, the person can become confused.
   b. The more exciting and fun an activity is, the more likely it will be engaging. However, it has to be fun from the learners' point of view. Remember that people's preferences change. Observe the person on an ongoing basis to determine if the activity is still engaging.
   c. When the teacher is interested in the activity. A bored teacher is a boring teacher.
6. Trying new things takes courage. When people take that risk and are successful (even with little steps) people need to notice. When people notice, praise and reinforce, the learner starts to feel good about him or herself. The person develops positive self-esteem. People with self-esteem will try new things and learn more. It is a cycle. Success does breed success!
7. The teacher. In most instances, the teacher is the direct support staff.
8. The teacher's job is to find something at which the learner can succeed. It may be a challenge to find something that the person can do well. The secret is to start small and provide lots of chances to practice. Help as much as is needed, but not too much. And, finally CELEBRATE. Let the person know when you see progress. Don't wait until they can "run a marathon" so to speak.

Lesson 5 Feedback Answers

1. a. Provide supports and services so that the goal or objective can be achieved without requiring a major change in the individual's behavior.
   b. Develop a teaching plan so that the goal or objective can be achieved through a change in the person's behavior.
2. Teaching programs are almost always necessary, either to help the individual learn to perform those tasks for which we cannot provide support, or to help the individual to gain more independence, so that extraordinary supports can be discontinued.
3. For most people, formal goals and teaching plans take a very small portion of the day. Usually people spend most of their day with less structured activities. If used wisely, these day-to-day activities could provide unlimited chances for teaching and learning. Informal

teaching and "incidental learning" **are** just as important as formal teaching. Even though we don't keep data during these teaching moments, good methods will help people learn more

4. The person with the support of their person-centered planning team.
5. The self assessment helps the team decide what the person wants most. The team needs to ask:
   - Is this skill or activity needed for where the person wants to live, work, or have fun?
   - Could the person get along without this skill?
   - Is there another way he or she could achieve the goal faster?
6. Every effort should be made to focus on things MOST necessary for reaching the person's goals. After all the goals related to safety, health, rights, or protection from harm are met, the team should ask questions like these:
   - What does the person want to learn?
   - What skills will help the person meet his or her goals?
   - What skills will improve the person's quality of life?
   - What skills will increase chances to participate?
   - What skills will improve relationships?
   - Which skills will the person learn quickly?
   - Which skills will the person have lots of chances to practice?
   - What skills or behaviors will improve the person's image or reputation?
7. What are important considerations for where to help people learn?
   - **Help people learn in natural settings** (the settings where the skill will be used.) People learn faster in the actual setting and among others who are doing the task. As soon as the person learns the skill, gradually fade out your support.
   - **Structure the setting so that learning is likely to occur.** Pick a setting which allows the learner to stay focused on the task. Pay attention to the impact of lighting, noise, equipment, materials, etc.
   - **Help people learn skills in the presence of other people, if the presence of others is not distracting or embarrassing for the learning.** Others (peers, coworkers, family members, other staff) may have a more powerful impact than the teacher. Help people learn in a place that motivates the person to learn the skill and where he/she can observe others enjoying the benefits of the skill. If the person has trouble paying attention with others present, you may have to begin teaching in a less distracting place. But as soon as you can move to a more natural environment (place). Of course some skills, like how to take medication should be taught in a private place. If it is embarrassing for the learner to have others watch while they are learning, respect their choice to learn the skill privately.
8. What are important considerations for when to help people learn?
   - **Help people learn when the skill would normally be used**. The best time to help people learn tooth brushing is after meals and before bed. The best time to help people learn cooking is at mealtime.
   - **Use the learner's preferences to structure learning**. If the person has more energy in the morning, plan to help him learn then. However, if the learner is not a morning person, wait at least until after that first cup of coffee.
9. What are important considerations for who will help people learn?

- **Use natural supports**. The concept of natural supports refers to the kind of support that members of a community give each other. There are many situations where people participating in the activity can help the person learn.
10. What are important considerations for how often to teach?
    - **Provide frequent chances to practice the skill**. Teaching an activity less than one time per week is not effective for people with ID. Frequent practice is needed.
    - **Arrange for spaced practice.** Learning and remembering are not the same thing. Skills will be remembered better if some time passes between practice sessions. Instead of spending hour after hour teaching the same skill (massed practice), help people learn it throughout the day or week. The goal is to help the skill become part of long-term memory.
    - **Embed the skill into daily routines.** Practicing something over and over without any connection to how the skill will be used can be boring. Some learners may even refuse to participate. Instead, find ways to embed (practice the skill in many activities and settings) the skill in daily routines. This is very important for motor, social, communication, and decision making skills.
11. Answers will vary. Discuss your answers with your supervisor or trainer. Some possible answers are listed below:
    a. paying for groceries at the store, meals at restaurants, movie tickets
    b. washing clothing at the Laundromat
    c. learning to clean the rooms with a job coach or from the hotel supervisor after being hired
    d. practice ordering in the person's favorite restaurant.
12. Human service staff are responsible for:
    a. structuring learning opportunities
    b. implementing effective teaching strategies
    c. providing time for the person to practice targeted skills
13. without; dependant
14. Help people learn the skill under the conditions in which it will normally occur (embedded in the normal routine of the day with frequent opportunities for practice, natural settings, authentic materials, natural supports.)
15. very complex skills; effective teaching; support
16. The following are some examples of correct answers, however there are many correct answers. Discuss your answers with your supervisor or trainer.
    a. I suggested that we help Brad learn how to make his favorite kind of eggs (scrambled eggs with American cheese melted on top.)
    b. I use picture cue cards when I work with Sharleen because she doesn't comprehend a lot of language.
    c. James does better when he is free to move about, so I am helping him learn how to vacuum.
    d. We have practice sessions for Brad's sign language objective in 15 different activities throughout the day.
    e. When I was assisting Sandra to learn how to walk to work, we went the same way everyday, until she learned the route.

f. I work with Joe when he is loading the dishwasher. I avoid pointing out mistakes if he misplaces a dish. Instead, I ask them to, "Try another way."

g. If Leah starts to make a lot of mistakes on one task in the workshop, we switch to another task.

h. I always complement Kelly whenever she does the dishes, even if I have to remind her to do them.

i. I wait to see if Liz remembers all the steps in the task analysis before I give a verbal or physical prompt.

j. I use sign language when I am communicating with Gail so she doesn't think that she is the only one who "talks" this way.

k. If Bruce increases his productivity at work, I send a note to the residential staff so they can talk about it that evening and share in his success.

l. I help Dixie chart her progress on the cooking objective.

Lesson 6 Feedback Answers

1. **A. HAND WASHING**
   1. Turn on water and adjust temperature.
   2. Wet hands and pick up soap.
   3. Wash hands.
   4. Rinse hands.
   5. Turn off water and dry hands.

   B. PUTTING ON A SOCK
   1. Pick up sock.
   2. Insert toes into sock.
   3. Pull foot of sock over foot.
   4. Pull sock top over heel.
   5. Pull sock up ankle.

   You are not necessarily wrong if the steps that you listed are different from those above. There is more than one correct way to divide a task into a sequence of responses. The point to remember is that even simple tasks are often much more complex than they first seem to be.

2.
   a. Help the person put their pants on, leaving the pants a few inches down from the waist. Ask them to "put your pants on", and reinforce them when they pull them up to their waist. Help pull them up if needed.

   b. When they can do that step successfully, help them get their pants over their feet and up to about their knees. Say, "put your pants on", and reinforce them when they pull them up to their waist.

   c. When they can do that much by themselves, help them get the pants over their feet and ankles. Then say, "put your pants on", and reinforce them when they pull them up to their waist.

d. Get the pants ready to put on by bunching up each leg. Ask them to "put your pants on", and reinforce them when they pull them up to their waist.

e. Finally, just give the prompt "put your pants on", and reinforce them when they pull them up to their waist.

3. increases
4. backward

Lesson 7 Feedback Answers

1. Prompts are brief instructional cues given to help the learner know what is expected of him or her.
2. before
3. Some tasks require certain types of prompts. Some learners do better with certain kinds of prompts. You may have to try a few different kinds of prompts to see what works. Watching other staff that have an effective teaching style with the person is another way to learn what works. If a skill is being taught in the natural environment (i.e. in a work or community setting), use the type of prompt that will draw the least amount of attention to the person but still be effective. For example, physical prompts are quite noticeable, and shouldn't be used on a job setting, unless that is the only way that we can help people learn the needed skills or tasks.
4. Keep prompts simple. Use prompts only when needed. Fade prompts as soon as possible.
5. Fading is defined as "the gradual elimination of assistance so that eventually the task is completed more independently."
6. a) Gradually provide less physical assistance, which requires the learner to make more of the movement independently. The teacher starts with full physical contact and gradually progresses to light touch and finally no contact.
   b) Gradually withdraw assistance earlier and earlier in the response sequence, so that the learner independently completes more and more of the task.
7. Shadowing refers to fading physical contact in and out based on the needs of the learner. The teacher places his hands near the learners hand but actual physical contact is only 3-5 seconds at a time.
8. Answers will vary. Discuss your answers with your supervisor or trainer.
9. The teacher or job coach would move their hand in a full "S" motion over the mirror simulating wiping the mirror. Gradually a smaller and smaller gesture is used until the job coach only points to the mirror and finally waits while the person wipes it correctly.
10. The person is not given an opportunity to fail since the teacher is ready to give the next prompt before there is no response or an error is beginning to be made.
11. If this method is used, it is easy to get into the habit of giving too many prompts, to get things done quickly. Too many prompts can be confusing and/or annoying for the learner. In addition, providing too much help, for too long, teaches the learner to depend on prompts.
12. Answers will vary. One example might be waiting to see if the person puts his coat on when he sees others get their coats (least prompt), if necessary ask the person, "What do you need to do before you go out?" If the person still doesn't get their coat, you might say, "Get your coat before you go outside." If the person still doesn't get their coat you might have to

show them where the coat is and provide a physical assist (most prompt.)Discuss your answers with your supervisor or trainer.

13. Success
14. "Try this" or "Try another way"

Lesson 8 Feedback Answers

1. dead
2. increase
3. change his or her behavior
4. Reinforcement is more than a reward. Rewards are given to people for doing something. A reinforcer increases or improves behavior.
5. true
6. The principle of reinforcement can be used to
   a. help people learn a new skill
   b. refine or modify existing skills
   c. maintain appropriate behavior
7. List the three parts of reinforcement.
   a. The behavior occurs
   b. After the behavior has occurred, there is a consequence (a "reinforcer" is provided)
   c. The behavior is strengthened. The next time the same situation arises, the behavior is more likely to occur.
8. In similar circumstances, the behavior will likely be repeated. The person has learned to expect that if they "do" the same thing they will get something they want (attention, tangible reinforcer, etc.)
9. natural events
10. True
11. are not
12. **Helen sitting quietly.**.
    • Did the behavior occur? Yes, she quieted down for a few minutes.
    • Did a consequence immediately follow the behavior? Yes, Jose said, "Look at Helen, she sure knows how to sit quietly."
    • Describe the consequence: Praise
    • Did the behavior increase in frequency? No, Helen was quiet for a moment but then began to yell again and was generally disruptive for the next several nights.
    • Is this an example of reinforcement? No

    Art sitting alone
    • Did the behavior occur? Yes, he saw Art sitting alone.
    • Did a consequence immediately follow the behavior? Yes ,Philip sat down and talked with him encouraging him to join in the group activities.
    • Describe the consequences. Attention and encouragement.
    • Did the behavior increase in frequency? Yes. Art spent more and more time sitting alone.
    • Is this an example of reinforcement? Yes.

Henry quickly completing his work assignment.
- Did the behavior occur? Yes. Henry quickly finished his work assignment.
- Did a consequence immediately follow the behavior? Yes, his supervisor told Henry that he could leave work.
- Describe the consequence. Getting to leave work early.
- Did the behavior increase in frequency? No. Henry didn't seem to work faster the next time he had the opportunity.
- Is this an example of reinforcement? No. The behavior, working quickly, did not increase in frequency. While leaving work early may be reinforcement for most people, it does not seem to function as a reinforcer for Henry.

Larry arguing
- Did the behavior occur? Yes, he was involved in arguments.
- Did a consequence immediately follow the behavior? Yes. Criticizing him, telling him that he should not argue, that it was wrong and so forth.
- Describe the consequence: Criticism
- Did the behavior increase in frequency? Yes. He seemed to be involved in more arguments than ever.
- Is this an example of reinforcement? Yes. Criticism was functioning as a reinforcer for Larry's arguing behavior. Criticism did in fact temporarily stop the arguing behavior. But in the long run, Larry was learning that he could receive attention from the staff if he argued with them. Criticism might not be a reinforcer for you or for many people but that does not change the fact that it did function as a reinforcer for Larry.

13. There is no simple answer to most of the items. Compare your responses to those listed below. Your instructor may choose to use this exercise as the basis for a group discussion.

- <u>Talk about his TV shows</u> - Obviously you can't physically stop John from talking about his favorite TV shows. However, you could set aside a specific time for you and John to talk which could be treated as an earned privilege.
- <u>Drink coffee</u> - Again, to use coffee as a reinforcer, we would have to be willing and legally able to deny John access to coffee. The legal issue here is that the residential system provides a "reasonable" amount of coffee to each person who wants coffee. The workshop provides coffee to everyone who has 25¢ to pay for it. Since the residence provides everyone coffee as part of their room and board, we can't single out John and make him earn his coffee by making his bed, being polite to other people, etc. We would, however, have the legal right to make John pay for coffee he drinks beyond the "reasonable" amount provided by the service system. This extra coffee could also be used as a reinforcer since access to it is a privilege, not a legal right.
- <u>Talks on the phone with his brother</u> - Courts have long held that access to communication (phone, mail, etc.) is a fundamental legal right which is guaranteed by our citizenship, not earned by our behavior.
- <u>Smokes a pipe most of the day</u> - Here the service system has no legal obligation to provide him with pipe tobacco, but we also have no legal right to prevent him from smoking, which we would have to be able to do to use smoking as a reinforcer. John

might be prohibited from smoking in his bed or in certain sections of the residence, but these restrictions would be based on health and safety concerns.

- Going bowling - If the service program provides a regular bowling program for all interested people, this bowling activity could not be used as a reinforcer. However, other "extra" opportunities for bowling could be used as reinforcers because they would be considered a privilege.
- Praise and positive feedback - No one has a legal right to receive praise for their accomplishments. Praise could, therefore, be given or withheld as a reinforcer for appropriate behavior.
- Wears a toy gun - The legal issues here are the same as for #1 on this list.
- Goes for walks - The only basis for limiting John's access to the community would be evidence that if he exercises this right, he is a danger to himself or others. This evidence could then be used to legally limit his right to movement.

Notice that the common theme to all of the above answers was that adults with disabilities have the same legal rights as you or I --unless their rights have been removed or limited by a court of law.

14. Teaching that person to like and want "praise," can be done by combining praise with things the person likes. This process may need to be repeated many times for some people.

15.
- Ask the person;
- ask others who know the person;
- observe the person (preferred activity rule;
- observe other similar people (same age, same gender, similar interests).

16. earn

17. Items that cannot be used for reinforcement because they cannot legally or ethically be withheld include:
- Use of the mail.
- Use of the telephone.
- Access to visitors.
- Recreation.
- Going to church.
- Access to their own money.
- Personal clothing and possessions.
- Food and drink.
- Community access.

18. Reinforcement can also strengthen inappropriate behavior. If a reinforcer is provided, no matter what we intend, the behavior is likely to be increased. The teacher's plan or goal does not determine whether a behavior will be strengthened. If a reinforcer follows an undesirable behavior, it is possible to accidentally reinforce a behavior.

19. The reinforcing consequences immediately follow the behavior you wish to strengthen or increase.

20. The important point to remember is that the closer the reinforcer follows the behavior the more the behavior will be strengthened. If someone behaves poorly right before you reinforce him or her for something good they did earlier, then the undesirable behavior will

be increased. It doesn't matter whether you intended to or not, you will have accidentally reinforced the wrong behavior.
21. Decreased or reinforced less often.
22. Continuous or frequent.
23. It usually takes frequent reinforcement to initially strengthen a new behavior. However, if we fail to fade our reinforcement when they are doing better, the learner may come to expect reinforcement every time. To maintain the behavior, it is important to reinforce less often once the behavior is learned.
24. Selective reinforcement means that you only reinforce the behavior you wish to strengthen. at the same time you stop reinforcing behaviors you want to reduce.
25. As long as the person is performing the task correctly, no verbal or physical feedback is provided by the teacher. Correctly completing each step in sequence is feedback enough.
26. The teacher begins by reinforcing the person for what he or she can already perform. Gradually the person is expected to perform better.
27. a. when the person does not do the skill or task, even if given help. b. when the person displays a form of the behavior but it needs improvement.

28.
a. Right Way-   First determine about how much he usually eats. You might try measuring how much of the meal he eats or maybe how many calories he usually consumes. Set the first reinforcement requirement at or only slightly above his present level. Gradually require more of the meal to be eaten before reinforcing him until he is finally eating an appropriate amount of food.

b. Right Way   First figure out how much of the assignment Carla usually completes. This level of performance could be your initial reinforcement requirement. As she gradually improved, you would require her to finish more of the assignment. This procedure would be continued until she achieves the final goal.

c. Right Way   As Pat planned the behavior management procedure, she recognized that she could not wait for perfectly appropriate social interactions before reinforcing Joan. If she were to wait for perfect behavior, she would probably never get a chance to reinforce Joan. Instead, she first decided to reinforce (praise) even slight improvements in Joan's social behavior. For instance, one afternoon Joan asked Carol if she would mind changing the TV channel. She didn't ask as nicely as she should have, but at least she asked. Pat immediately praised Joan's behavior.

As Joan's social interactions improved, Pat was able to require even more appropriate behavior before she reinforced her. Because of the improvement in Joan's social behavior, other people's attitudes toward her became more positive, and this also helped strengthen her new skills.

Lesson 9 Feedback Answers

1. Extinction is simply defined as eliminating reinforcement for a specific behavior.
2. If we can completely stop reinforcing the behavior.
3. In order to use an extinction procedure you need to:
   a. Identify the reinforcer(s) maintaining the behavior.
   b. Make sure that the reinforcers no longer follow the undesired behavior
4. Guidelines for extinction.
   a. Reinforce a desired behavior to reinforce at the same time as you start ignoring the undesired behavior.
   b. Be as consistent in not reinforcing the undesired behavior.
   c. Remember that only the person's undesired behavior is on extinction, not the person. Help them find a way to get their needs met in a more appropriate manner. Give them attention when the undesired behavior is not present. It must be clear to them that things are different (better) when they are not doing the undesired behavior.
5. When placing an undesired behavior on extinction:
   a. Don't be surprised if the behavior problem gets worse before it gets better.
   b. Look for a gradual decrease in the problem behavior.
6. It is very important to remember that for many people, almost any kind of attention - even criticism - can serve as a reinforcer. The person's undesired behavior receives attention in the form of criticism. Whether it seems logical or not, the fact is that the criticism often serves to reinforce the behavior -- especially if the person receives very little attention for more desirable behavior. The only way to break the cycle is to not reinforce the person for the undesired behavior. Do not give attention for the undesired behavior.
7. Randy frequently leaves his work station
   a. The reinforcer for Randy leaving his work station is probably the attention shown by the work supervisor. If Randy stops working or walks away, the work supervisor attends to him. Probably if he works consistently, the work supervisor <u>ignores</u> him.
   b. The work supervisor should reverse the situation. He should praise Randy when he works and, as much as possible, <u>ignore him</u> when he is not <u>working</u>.

   Maria often cries if she has to dress herself. When this happens, someone usually dresses her so she will not be so upset.

   c. The reinforcer for Maria's crying behavior is probably the attention shown by others <u>and</u> not having to dress herself. She has learned that by crying - others will show her a lot of attention, and that she can have someone do her work for her.
   d. The staff must try, as much as possible, to ignore her crying and have her finish dressing herself even if she does begin crying. Reinforce any attempt to dress herself.

Lesson 10 Feedback Answers

1. Answers will vary. Ask your staff trainer or a QDDP to evaluate your answer.
2. If after implementing the teaching plan consistently, the person is unable to perform the skill or behavior. The staff in consultation with the QDDP and the rest of the team, including the person with a disability should consider the following options:

- Re-do the Teaching Plan: If the person does not learn after consistent and frequent practice, the next step would be to decide how to improve the plan. Are there parts of the plan which could be strengthened or redesigned? Are there prompts that might work better for this person? Are more powerful reinforcers required? Does the learner have a high rate of problem behaviors that prevent him from practicing and learning? Is the task analysis organized well for this person? Would backward chaining work better?

- Re-do the Task Analysis: If after making the above changes, the person still did not learn you may have to re-do the task analysis. Usually, you would re-do the task analysis by breaking some or all of the teaching steps into smaller more easy to learn steps. Keep in mind however, that your goal should be to use as few teaching steps as possible and still have the person learn.

- Re-do the Method: If after making the above changes, the person still did not learn, it would be necessary to find another way to do the skill. Maybe an air blower will be needed if the person just can't get their hands dry with a paper towel.

Appendix B: References

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Appendix C: Personal Outcome Measures

Agencies providing services to persons with developmental disabilities in North Dakota are required to be accredited by The Council on Quality and Leadership in Supports for People with Disabilities (The Council). Many of the agency's policies and procedures will be based on best practices as defined by the standards outlined by this organization in their publications: *Outcome Based Performance Measures* (1993) and *Personal Outcome Measures (2000*). The Council's personal outcome orientation focuses attention on the outcomes that people can expect from the services and supports they receive.

Because definitions of relationships, respect, autonomy, and safety will vary from person to person, personal outcomes are individualized for each person served. The service provider's role becomes one of listening and learning what is important to each person receiving services. Once the service provider understands the person's priorities, their role shifts to facilitating or supporting the individual in attaining their personal outcomes. Quality services and supports are defined by specific items that people with disabilities indicate are most important to them. Based on individual and focus group meetings with people with disabilities the Council currently features twenty-five personal outcomes:

Identity
People choose personal goals.
People choose where and with whom they live.
People choose where they work.
People have intimate relationships.
People are satisfied with services.
People are satisfied with their personal life situations.

Affiliation
People live in integrated environments.
People participate in the life of the community.
People perform different social roles.
People have friends.
People are respected.

Health and Wellness
People have the best possible health.
People are free from abuse and neglect.
People experience continuity and security.

Autonomy
People choose their daily routine.
People have time, space, and opportunity for privacy.
People decide when to share personal information.
People use their environments.

Attainment
People choose services.
People realize personal goals.

Safety
People are connected to natural support networks.
People are safe.

Rights
People exercise rights.
People are treated fairly.

Periodically, surveyors from The Council will visit each agency to meet with individuals receiving services, family members, and staff to examine the outcomes of support and service provision on the lives or people with disabilities. Surveyors may follow up on their on-site observations and interviews with a review of records and documentation. Agencies who meet the high standard of The Council may be accredited for two or three years.

Source: The Council (1999). *Thinking About Outcomes. An Orientation Guide*. Towson, MD: The Council on Quality and Leadership in Supports for People with Disabilities.

APPENDIX D: Schedules of Reinforcement

Ratio Schedules (Objective: Rapid Response)

Ratio schedules are most often used when the objective is for the person to respond rapidly, as on a production line. There is a direct relationship between the number of responses and the number of reinforcers provided (more responses = more reinforcers earned). This type of schedule can be designed so that reinforcement is provided after a fixed number of responses (fixed ratio schedule) or variable number (variable ratio schedule).

A fixed ratio schedule is easy to design. Each time the person completes a fixed number of responses, he or she is reinforced. For example, let's suppose you were working with Mary. She knows how to perform a certain production task, like soldering connections on a circuit board, but is currently working well below the industrial rate. You could use a fixed ratio schedule by setting it up so that she earns a token (to be exchanged for other reinforcers) for every ten solder connections completed (fixed ratio 10). As Mary's work performance improves, you could gradually increase the number of responses required for reinforcement. This procedure could be continued until the work performance objective was achieved.

A variable ratio schedule is almost identical to a fixed ratio except that the number of responses required for reinforcement varies in an <u>unpredictable way</u>. Look at the following example:

On the fixed ratio schedule, every time Mary completes ten solder connections, she receives a token. On the variable ratio schedule, she received tokens after completing two connections, then after 16, then 6, etc. Mary still **averages** 10 responses per reinforcement--it's just that it is impossible for her to predict exactly when she will be reinforced. The unpredictable nature of a variable ratio reinforcement schedule makes it particularly effective in generating high rates of behavior.

Fixed Ratio 10					Variable Ratio 10				
10 responses → one reinforcer					2 responses → one reinforcer				
10	"	"	"	"	16	"	"	"	"
10	"	"	"	"	6	"	"	"	"
10	"	"	"	"	12	"	"	"	"
10	"	"	"	"	20	"	"	"	"
10	"	"	"	"	8	"	"	"	"
10	"	"	"	"	2	"	"	"	"
10	"	"	"	"	10	"	"	"	"
10	"	"	"	"	14	"	"	"	"
10	"	"	"	"	10	"	"	"	"
100 responses → ten reinforcers					100 responses → ten reinforcers				

On a fixed ratio 10 schedule, after you are reinforced, you always have to make 10 more responses before you will be reinforced. On this type of schedule, people often pause or stop working briefly <u>after</u> they are reinforced. On variable ratio 10 schedule, you might be reinforced after only one or two responses -- therefore, less pauses and delays occur.
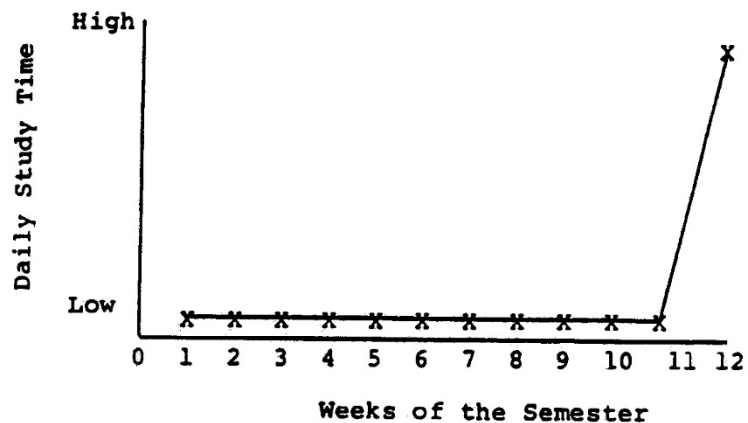
Time Schedule

The second basic type of reinforcement schedule is a time schedule. On a time schedule the person is reinforced for a specific behavior after a fixed or variable amount of time has passed. The number of responses made doesn't influence whether the person will be reinforced--only the passage of time is important.

For example, let's say you are working with James, who when given a task to complete spends a considerable amount of time engaged in off-task, disruptive behavior. As part of a plan to increase his on-task performance and decrease disruptive behavior, you have decided to develop a reinforcement schedule for on-task performance. Your interest here is not in generating a high rate of a specific behavior; you simply want a consistent pattern of a task performance.

One alternative would be to reinforce James every five minutes if he is on task. You would simply observe at the end of each five-minute interval, and if James was on task, he would be reinforced. This type of schedule is called a fixed time or fixed interval schedule. This schedule might work initially to increase James' on-task performance, but over a period of time, a problem might develop. Can you guess what it might be? Write down your conclusion. Here's a hint: Assume James has a watch and can tell time.

If you concluded that rather than showing consistent on-task performance James <u>learned to work only toward the end of each five-minute interval, you're right</u>. The following graphs below show typical performance on this schedule.

Instead of studying consistently throughout the semester, most of us wait until the last week if not the last night to study for our exams.

Instead of preparing a little bit each day and gradually and carefully developing my tax return, I wait until the last minute and frantically put it together.
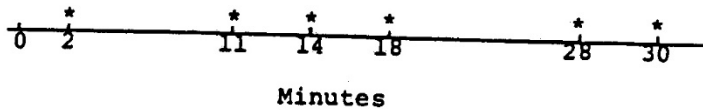
An, alternative schedule for use in helping James acquire consistent on-task performance would be to reinforce him after varying periods of time which were spaced unpredictably. Look at the following figure.

105

FIXED TIME SCHEDULE

```
     *     *     *     *     *     *
0    5     10    15    20    25    30
```
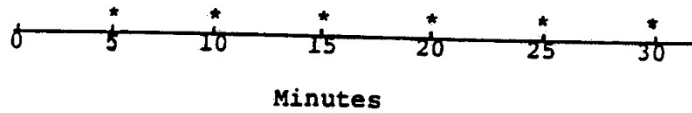
Minutes

*Reinforcer
 available

VARIABLE TIME SCHEDULE

```
    *         *    *    *         *    *
0   2         11   14   18        28   30
```

Minutes

On the fixed time schedule, James would be reinforced if he was on-task at the end of each five-minute interval (six reinforcers in thirty minutes).

On the variable time schedule, James would be reinforced if he was on-task after two minutes, after nine more minutes, after three more minutes, etc. The time between reinforcement opportunities varies in an unpredictable way. The only way James can be sure to receive each reinforcement is to perform consistently.

Summary

Use fixed or variable ratio schedules of reinforcement if the goal is to generate a high rate of behavior.

Use a variable time schedule of reinforcement if the goal is to produce consistent, steady performance.

An additional benefit of using an unpredictable, intermittent schedule of reinforcement is that such a schedule helps maintain the behavior during periods when reinforcement is not given frequently. Take, for example, the slot machines in Las Vegas. They only "pay off" every once in a while (an unpredictable, intermittent schedule - specifically, a variable ratio schedule). However, they do maintain a lot of behavior.

General Rule

It usually takes frequent, consistent reinforcement to initially strengthen a new behavior. Later, to maintain a behavior, shift to an intermittent schedule, either ratio or time-based.

APPENDIX E: Measuring Progress

OBJECTIVE:

- **Correctly measure learner progress during task acquisition.**

Introduction

Measuring learner performance is a major part of every teaching session. In the module entitled, "Writing Behavioral Objectives and Measuring Behavior," you learned how to use three different behavior measurement procedures. Those procedures are best for measuring a behavior which has already been learned. This lesson teaches you to use a measurement procedure which is specifically designed for **measuring acquisition of a multi-step task***.

When a person is learning a task which involves a sequence of small steps, the data should reflect the accuracy of the learner's response at each step in the sequences. The data sheet which follows, illustrates 14 days of data collection for Harold who is learning to wash his hands.

Description of the Form

A) The far left column (A) is used to list the steps of the task analysis. A one to three word phrase that describes each step is listed, starting with step 1 at the bottom and going up the page until all the steps have been listed.

B) The date boxes at the top of each column are used to record the date the trial was attempted.

Use of the Form

When a Step is Done Correctly: As the learner goes through the task, or immediately after he or she has finished, put a plus mark (+) in the column. In the example below, on 1/6, Harold completed steps 2, 3, 4, and 7 correctly.

Steps Requiring Assistance: If the learner required assistance, write in the code for the level of prompt provided:

(v) if a verbal prompt or instruction was given
(g) if a gestural prompt of cue was used to assist the learner
(p) if physical assistance or guidance was provided
In the example below on the trial on 1/1, Harold needed a physical prompt on steps 1, 5, and 7; and verbal prompts on steps 3 and 4.

Failure to Complete a Step: If the learner did not complete a step, even with assistance, or refused to perform the step, mark a (-) on the form for that step. In the example below, Harold refused to turn off the water, step 6, on 1/1.

DATA ACQUISITION RECORD

Scoring Code:

+ independently completes   **Name of Task:** Handwashing

v verbal prompt   **Conditions**: Before eating breakfast

g gestural prompt or cue   **Criterion:** 7/7 ; 4 /5 trials, no prompts

p physical prompt   **Learner:** Harold

- fails to complete this step, even with assistance

Date	1/1	1/2	1/3	1/4	1/5	1/6	1/7	1/8	1/9	1/10	1/11	1/12	1/13	1/14
7. Dry hands with towel	p	p	p	v	v	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
6. Turn off water	-	-	v	v	g	g	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
5. Rinse soap off hands	p	p	p	v	v	v	v	+	+	+	v	+	+	+
4. Rub hands together with soap	v	v	g	g	g	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
3. Pick up soap	v	v	v	v	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
2. Put hands in water	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
1. Adjust water temperature	p	p	p	p	p	p	p	p	v	+	v	+	+	+

Charting Progress:

Draw the Criterion Line: Draw a line across the graph, which represents the criterion for this task. In the example below, the criterion is 7 out of 7 steps without assistance.

At the End of a Trial: When a trial is finished, count the number of steps the person completed correctly. Place an "X" across the box, which indicates the total number correct for that trial. On 1/1 through 1/4, 1 step was completed correctly without assistance; on 1/5, 2 steps were completed correctly; and on 1/6, four steps were completed correctly.

To Chart the Person's Progress of Trials: As the learner progresses trial by trial, you can draw lines between the Xs. This will serve as a graph of the number of steps completed correctly per trial.

Compare the person's progress to the criterion for that task. On 1/14 Harold met criterion, 7/7 trials correctly without assistance for 4/5 trials.

Date	1/1	1/2	1/3	1/4	1/5	1/6	1/7	1/8	1/9	1/10	1/11	1/12	1/13	1/14
7. Dry hands with towel	p	p	p	v	v	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
6. Turn off water	-	-	v	v	g	g	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
5. Rinse soap off hands	p	p	p	v	v	v	v	+	+	+	v	+	+	+
4. Rub hands together with soap	v	v	g	g	g	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
3. Pick up soap	v	v	v	v	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
2. Put hands in water	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
1. Adjust water temperature	p	p	p	p	p	p	p	p	v	+	v	+	+	+

Appendix F: Punishment

OBJECTIVES:
- **Define punishment, using the three-part definition.**
- **List and briefly describe the guidelines for effective usage of punishment.**
- **Describe why a punisher must immediately follow the behavior to be effective.**
- **Describe what is meant by "a future decrease in the strength of the behavior.**
- **Describe legal constraints on the use of punishment procedures.**
- **Describe guidelines for the use of punishment.**

Punishment Defined

Punishment is probably the most misunderstood, and therefore the most misused, of all the behavioral management procedures. Before dealing with the misunderstandings, let's first define punishment.

Just like reinforcement, the definition of punishment has three main parts:
   a. After the person has completed the behavior you want to weaken or decrease;
   b. you do something to the person, providing a consequence for his or her behavior; and
   c. there must be a weakening of the behavior - he or she will be less likely to repeat the punished behavior in the future.

If you look back at the lesson on reinforcement, you will see that the definitions of punishment and reinforcement are similar, except that reinforcement strengthens behavior, while punishment weakens behavior.

Examples
1. Jerome was very frequently late to work. On Tuesday,
   a. He reported for work 20 minutes late.
   b. As he punched in, his supervisor called him over and told him that he was being demoted from job foreman because he was so often late.
   c. Over the next several months, Jerome was never late again, and he eventually was promoted again to foreman.
2. Lou was a very good basketball player. His one fault was that he yelled at and criticized his teammates if they made any mistakes. The coach realized that his behavior was hurting the team morale. During the last quarter of a crucial game
   a. Lou screamed at one of the team members who had just missed an easy shot.
   b. The coach immediately called a time out and sent Lou to the locker room for the rest of the game.
   c. The coach had to remove Lou from one later game for yelling, but after that he never yelled at a teammate for the rest of the season.

Punishment is simply a procedure which involves providing negative or unpleasant consequences for behavior in an attempt to weaken or decrease it.
Notice the importance of looking for a future decrease in behavior. You cannot determine whether a punisher is effective except by looking at the long-term effects on the behavior to be weakened. For example:

Vern Couch is an employee at one of the community vocational training programs. Vern has not adjusted well to the program, and often gets involved in heated arguments with other employees. Counseling Vern about the problem never seemed to work, so the staff decided to send Vern home each time he got into an argument. They hoped this kind of mild punishment procedure would solve the problem.

The first time Vern was sent home for arguing he complained loudly and bitterly. This convinced the staff that the procedure would work. They continued the procedure for several months until one of them realized that they were still sending Vern home as much as they had been in the beginning.

The staff, in the above example, made the mistake of assuming, because Vern seemed to dislike the punishment procedure, that it had to be effective. However, later they realized that it was not effective because they had to use it over and over. They should have focused on whether the procedure produced a decrease in behavior. If you find yourself frequently using what you think is a punishment procedure, stop it. Effective punishment procedures quickly decrease behavior, and therefore don't have to be used often.

Punishment is NOT
   a. **Retribution.** Punishment procedures are used only with the purpose of modifying behavior, never as retribution because someone "deserves" it. Punishment is used to decrease inappropriate behavior, and never as revenge for some misconduct.
   b. **A way to teach new behavior.** Even at maximum effectiveness punishment only results in a weakening of inappropriate behavior. You do not teach appropriate behavior by punishing

Guidelines for Use
There are a number of technical guidelines you should follow when using punishment procedures. (Later you will see that there are also important value-based and legal guidelines to follow.)
   1. **Immediate Punishment:** To most effectively weaken a behavior, you must punish the behavior immediately after it occurs. In other words, make sure that the punishing consequence immediately follows the behavior you wish to decrease or weaken. Immediate punishment is necessary for two reasons:
        a. The closer, in time, the punisher follows the behavior, the more the behavior will be weakened.
        b. The second reason immediate punishment is necessary can be seen in the following cartoon sequence.
   What behavior was most immediately followed by punishment? Running up to Mom - not drawing on the wall. Because the parents waited too long they mistakenly ended up punishing the children right after they had been behaving appropriately. This mistake can be avoided by providing immediate punishment.
   2. **Frequent Punishment:** When punishment is necessary, then the behavior to be weakened or decreased should be punished each time it occurs. This will result in the

most rapid decrease in behavior and will not confuse the person as to what is acceptable or appropriate behavior.

3. **Severity of Punishment:** Since the only purpose of the punishment procedure is to weaken a problem behavior, you should use the least restrictive or aversive procedure that it's possible to use and still succeed in decreasing the problem behavior.

4. **Selective Punishment:** Make sure you have specified the exact behavior(s) to be weakened, and punish only that behavior(s). The fact that a somewhat aversive procedure is being used to weaken a specific problem should not interfere with your normal positive relationship with the individual.

5. **Don't Reinforce and Punish the Same Behavior:** The effectiveness of a punishment procedure is often decreased because the problem is also being reinforced. Once you begin a punishment procedure, you should try to attend to (reinforce) the problem behavior as little as possible.

6. **Reinforce Alternative Behaviors:** Punishment for a problem behavior should always be accompanied by reinforcement for positive alternative behaviors. If more appropriate behaviors can be strengthened, especially those which compete with or are incompatible with the problem behavior, the problem behavior will decrease more rapidly.

NOTE - Later in this module, in a section entitled 'Weakening or Decreasing Behavior,' you will see how these ideas can be incorporated into more comprehensive teaching programs.

Limitations on the Use of Punishment Procedures

It would be a serious mistake to depend heavily on punishment procedures to manage the behavior problems of your people with disabilities. Some of the more important reasons are:

1. **Legal Considerations:** There are extensive restrictions on the use of punishment procedures and court decisions, which expressly prohibit the use of physical punishment, restraint, isolation and removal or denial of many of the individuals' rights and privileges. As you will recall from the initial training module entitled "Supporting Individuals with Disabilities in the Community," people with disabilities, like any other citizens, have legal rights dealing with issues such as:

    (a) freedom of speech
    (b) freedom of association
    (c) access to personal money, clothing, possessions
    (d) community access
    (e) use of the mail and telephone

    You learned that it was a violation of the individual's legal rights to use such rights as reinforcers because it would involve the potential for denial of these rights. It should be clear then, that denial of such rights cannot be used as punishment for an inappropriate behavior. (You may recall that a legal right may be removed, after a judicial hearing, when it has been proved that for the person to have access to this right would constitute a danger to himself/herself or others).

2. **Value-Based Issues:** As was the case with reinforcement, it is not enough to limit our analysis of punishment to what is simply legally permissible. For example, we should ask ourselves, what implications are there for the use of punishment procedures in programs for individuals with disabilities, from the point of view of the principle of normalization?

Normalization

There is no inherent conflict between the principle of normalization and punishment. Punishment is a natural or normal part of life. We have learned not to do many things because we were punished when we did them. We learned:

> not to touch hot things------> because we were burned when we picked them up
> not to look down when we walk-----> because we ran into things
> not to throw food at Mom -----> because we were spanked
> not to exceed the speed limit -----> because we got a ticket and lost money

We cannot deny the existence of punishment - it is a natural part of everyday life. However, there are special considerations which you must take into account when deciding whether a punishment procedure should be a formal part of an individual's teaching program:

- There is no doubt that a punishment procedure could be used to help an individual to behave in more normal or typical ways. But we must also weigh the indirect results of using a punishment procedure - especially for a person with disabilities. As you know, generally punitive procedures and explicit punishment practices have characterized the history of services for persons with disabilities. Systematic, frequent use of punishment procedures would tend to perpetuate this devaluing stereotype regardless of the potential positive effects.
- Consider the fact that most persons with disabilities are already accorded a low status position in our society. It is likely that the systematic, frequent use of punishment procedures will further lower their status. Read the case history which follows:
  Case History: Kathleen is very disruptive. She often argues with staff and other people. Sometimes her outbursts escalate into actual physical fights.

Punishment Model: Staff decide to discipline (punish) Kathleen for each of her disruptive outbursts by "giving her a good talking to" and denying her access to a variety of special privileges.

Positive Model: Staff decide to teach Kathleen more appropriate ways of interacting with others. Each person took turns modeling or demonstrating more appropriate ways of behaving - provided her with prompts and cues as to when to do what and praised her when she showed improvement.

The punishment model would probably not do much to enhance Kathleen's status. It might even devalue her in the eyes of those who watch or are involved in carrying out the program.

Contrast this with the positive perceptions created by procedures which show staff taking the time to:

    a. model and demonstrate appropriate behavior
    b. provide frequent cues and prompts
    c. systematically praise her for improvement.

You might ask, what if the positive program doesn't work? There is no simple answer here. It's a matter of weighing or analyzing all the possible outcomes. If the behavior problem has not been decreased, even though we have attempted all the positive approaches we have available, should we go on to more aversive procedures? If the behavior problem provides a real danger to the individual or others or is a major barrier to further progress, the team might have to take this step. (The later section on weakening behavior covers some of the issues involved in the regulation and management of these programs.)

You must analyze all the outcomes or consequences. What is gained if the problem behavior is reduced or eliminated? What are the potentially negative results which may occur (especially in terms of increased stigma for the individual and the service system) because of the use of punishment procedures?

One specific issue, age-appropriateness, deserves special attention. When punishment procedures are developed, every attempt should be made to use age-appropriate procedures. You read earlier about the importance of using age-appropriate reinforcers. The same reasoning applies to the use of punishment procedures.

Also, keep in mind that attention to the issue of age-appropriateness would seriously limit the use of any formal punishment procedures with adults. If you have problems with a fellow worker, do you call together other staff to develop a punishment program? Or do you talk with the person in an attempt to find a reasonable solution to the problem? If this didn't work you would probably try to find a new way to interact with the person so that the problem might be prevented in the future.

Caution
Keep in mind that avoiding doing anything - simply allowing a person to continue to behave in inappropriate, socially unacceptable manner - is not an acceptable alternative. The person's inappropriate behavior would continue to be a barrier to further progress, and the neglect or avoidance of direct action by staff would be interpreted by many people as rejection or devaluing of the individual.

Final Note
Because of the potential for abuse and denial of legal rights, punishment procedures warrant careful attention. Each person must be treated respectfully, in a manner which affirms personal dignity, regardless of the setting or type of service. Principles of effective teaching require respect for the dignity and legal rights of the persons being served.

Appendix G: Decreasing Existing Behaviors

OBJECTIVE:
- **Develop an appropriate plan to decrease an existing behavior.**

Introduction

If the person and their team, decide it would benefit the person to learn to decrease a particular behavior, a teaching program can be designed for that purpose. However, there are some special considerations when dealing with problem behaviors.

Do Not Overemphasize Negative or Problem Behavior

Because of the negative impact some problem behaviors have on you, there will always be a tendency to pay more attention to them. When people fight, are late for meals, wet the bed, etc., all this may mean extra work or trouble for you. If you don't make a conscious effort to emphasize positive, growth oriented objectives, you may find that the team has far too many negative behavior-weakening objectives. There's nothing inherently wrong in selecting such objectives, but keep in mind that:

1. Many behavior problems can be reduced simply by more effectively teaching positive alternative behaviors.
2. It's more pleasant for everyone concerned to focus on positive growth-oriented objectives.

> **THERE IS NO SUBSTITUTE FOR WELL STRUCTURED PROGRAMS WHICH EMPHASIZE INDIVIDUAL GROWTH.**

Selection of Appropriate Performance Criteria

You often hear people talk about eliminating a particular behavior problem. While a goal of zero rate (elimination) for some behaviors (such as self-injurious behavior) is appropriate for most behavior problems, the goals should be to reduce the frequency and/or intensity of the behavior to acceptable limits. Most inappropriate behaviors have normal or acceptable limits, and in fact, the major reason the behavior has been labeled a problem is that it simply occurs too frequently.

Instead of automatically assuming that all behavior problems must be totally eliminated, you should develop criteria based on:

1. What are the consequences, to the individual and others, of engaging in this behavior?
2. Are there typical or acceptable limits for the frequency of this behavior?

Try to Balance All the Possible Alternatives

What are the consequences of letting the behavior continue? The point is to avoid the following two extremes:
1. Not doing anything because respect for the individual's rights does not allow you to take any action. Respect for an individual's right does not mean that good faith efforts to develop plans to help him or her control problem behavior is illegal.
2. Anything is OK as long as the behavior problem is solved. This position overlooks the fact that there are almost always negative effects, along with the benefits, of any behavioral intervention. Teaching procedures which unnecessarily stigmatize the person by using atypical, or age-inappropriate procedures, or use procedures which violate the individual's legal rights, cannot be justified simply because they are "effective."

Teaching Program for Weakening or Decreasing a Behavior

You will notice that most of the steps required to develop a teaching program to decrease behavior are similar to those involved in strengthening a behavior. The only major differences are in the teaching procedures. The major focus in the teaching procedures should be on applying extinction and punishment techniques.

1. **DESCRIBE THE BEHAVIOR TO BE WEAKENED**. Even though the goal is to decrease, not increase, a behavior, you should still describe your teaching intent through the development of an instructional objective. Your intent in fact is to teach the person not to behave in a certain way. You can use the same approach as before. Specify:
   A. The behavior to be weakened.
   B. Important Conditions (especially any prompts, rules or warnings that might be used).
   C. Criteria - The level to which the behavior will be decreased.
2. **MEASURE THE CURRENT STRENGTH OF THE BEHAVIOR.** Use the same basic measurement strategies as described in the lessons on strengthening behavior. The baseline data collected, before you begin the teaching procedures, will provide
   A. Information, which can be used in designing the teaching procedure.
   B. A comparison point to evaluate the effectiveness of the teaching procedure.
3. **DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT A TEACHING PROCEDURE TO WEAKEN OR DECREASE THE TARGET BEHAVIOR.** Since almost all the potential teaching programs are to some degree aversive (aversive defined as: both the individual and team would rather not have to carry out the program) it's especially important to use the least restrictive or aversive procedure possible. (Information is provided which will help you develop teaching programs which are consistent with this least restrictive approach.)

   Guidelines for Selecting Teaching Procedures. Following is a list of questions or issues which you should consider in developing any teaching procedure to weaken or decrease a behavior.

A. **General Environmental Considerations.** Many behavior problems arise simply because of: 1) a lack of structure; and 2) a lack of a variety of interesting activities for the individual to engage in. When people spend hours doing nothing but sitting and watching TV, or work hour after hour doing meaningless or boring jobs, we shouldn't be surprised that at times they engage in inappropriate behaviors.The more time individuals spend involved in interesting, rewarding activities (especially interacting with others) the less chance there is of inappropriate behavior occurring.

B. **Reinforcement of positive competing behaviors.** As you read earlier, it's almost always possible to select positive or appropriate behavior to strengthen, at the same time the inappropriate behavior is being weakened.

C. **Have all possible sources of reinforcement for the inappropriate behavior been eliminated?** It's critical that all the response (i.e. reinforcers) for the person to engage in the inappropriate behavior be eliminated - **if it's possible.**
You may remember from the lesson on extinction that it's not always possible to eliminate the reinforcers which are helping to maintain a behavior. The behavior may be self-reinforcing, as is the case with masturbation. In other cases, it may not be possible to consistently control the reinforcers provided by other people who have contact with the individual. If this is true, then it may be necessary to arrange for a punishment procedure to be carried out. (The basic strategies involved in a punishment procedure were described in the section on principles of behavior, and some specific limitations on its use are covered in this lesson.)

4. **CONTINUE TO COLLECT AND ANALYZE DATA CONCERNING THE BEHAVIOR TO BE WEAKENED.** You don't want to continue using procedures which are not working (decreasing the behavior). Consistent data collection and analysis will show whether the procedures are effective. Ineffective procedures can be modified, and effective procedures can be terminated when they are no longer needed.

5. **MODIFY THE TEACHING PROGRAM IF IT IS NOT SUCCESSFUL IN DECREASING THE PROBLEM BEHAVIOR.** If the teaching program is not successfully decreasing the problem behavior:

A. First carefully check to see that all aspects of the program were consistently carried out by everyone involved in the program.

B. If the program was consistently carried out but still not successful, increase the restrictions of the teaching program. Before taking this step, however, there are two considerations which you must address.
   1. Is the behavior problem important enough to warrant further restrictions? You must weigh the benefits which might be gained if the program is successful with the potential negative effects of the more restrictive procedures. For example, a restrictive "time out" procedure might be appropriate as part of a teaching program to decrease behaviors dangerous to the individual or others. However, it's hard to see how such a procedure could ever be appropriately used to decrease minor problems which are not dangerous or are not major barriers to the individual's other programs.
   2. Even if you decide the problem is important enough, you must now consider whether your agency's behavior management or aversive procedures policy will

allow you to use more restrictive procedures. Your agency should have a specific training program to teach all staff how the agency's policy affects their planning activities.

Use of Least Restrictive or Aversive Procedures

Your agency should have a specific policy which describes: 1) a hierarchy of behavior management procedures (based on aversive and restrictive criteria); and 2) a review procedure (both internal and external) to be followed. The policy is based on the individual's legal right to be served in the least restrictive alternative. Your objective will be to devise a teaching program that does not violate this right, but also one that is effective in decreasing the problem behavior.