

# Hands-On Behavioral Strategies

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Hope Through Treatment

# Areas of Focus

- Offering Choices
- Keeping Your Client Busy
- Tone of Voice
- Planned Ignoring
- Working with a pair
- Neutral Redirection
- Following Through
- Reinforcing Desired Behavior
- Using Consequences
- Other Strategies to Consider
- Role Play
- Questions

# Offering Choices

- Some children tend to get “stuck” in oppositional cycles. This type of behavior can be especially strong if they feel they have no control over their environment.
- Therefore, it is important to offer choices between activities (e.g., craft or puzzle) and within activities (while completing a craft, choice of using markers or crayons).

# Keeping Your Client Busy

- Task variation is an effective teaching strategy by presenting a variety of tasks within a single teaching session.
- Easy and preferred tasks are interspersed among more challenging and novel tasks.
- It is important to teach the children how to occupy their time in a functional way.
- Children often display an increase in inappropriate behaviors when they are not actively engaged (i.e., when they are bored).

## Giving Effective Commands: Tone of Voice

- Our tone of voice often conveys more information to the client than our words
- Only ask questions if you want an answer (i.e., “yes”, “no”). Do not utilize them when giving a command (e.g., “Do you want to go to school?”)
- Reduce distractions before giving commands

# Planned Ignoring

- Planned ignoring is a conscious decision to not attend to a maladaptive behavior at the time it occurs (i.e., behaviors that are off-task, but that do not endanger the physical or psychological safety of others).
- It is important to remember that planned ignoring means ignoring the behavior and not the child/client

## Neutral Redirection

- Remaining neutral involves using a business-like tone of voice and volume level, while limiting facial affect (i.e., appear bored, not shifting eye gaze or body posture).

## Following Through

- It is important to always follow through with requests concerning tasks (i.e., task completion).
- Expectations can be flexible and/or modified as needed, as long as a portion of the directive is completed.

# Reinforcing Desired Behavior

- Behaviors that are reinforced will increase in frequency (either positive or negative).
- Reinforcement is individual depending on the child (e.g., a child may not be motivated by social praise or may find negative attention reinforcing).
- Types of reinforcement (edible, social, activity, intrinsic, material/token)
- It is important to note that reinforcement also strengthens appropriate behavior that already exists, as well as desired behaviors.

# Using Consequences

- It is important to deal with behaviors when they first occur
- Utilize logical consequences
- Follow STA's Behavior Modification Guidelines and the individual client's Behavior Plans or Programs
- Verbal Reprimands have limited success when used with individuals with ASD
- Record and evaluate ABC data to determine what is effective in reducing problematic behaviors (Note: each behavior serves a purpose or function for that client)
- Consequences alone do not work for all children
- Remember: we are not in the business of imposing our will on others

# Helpful Hints

- Avoid lengthy directives (e.g., “Bob, it’s time to eat supper, let’s go and sit down”).
- Use schedules (visual or written)
- Provide transition warnings
- Avoid tasks that are beyond the child’s ability (i.e., set them up for success)
- Beware of a client’s personal space
- Utilize the prompt hierarchy (i.e., moving down the hierarchy and allowing adequate processing time)- use least intrusive prompting

## Helpful Hints Cont'd

- Keep things positive
- Utilize “first-then” contingencies
- Follow through on consequences
- Utilize visual supports
- Use a firm, yet neutral tone of voice
- Utilize indirect verbal prompts (e.g., “What do you need to do?”)
- Check-in (i.e., if appropriate have the client repeat what is coming up next by use of a schedule)

# Role Play

- Divide into groups of 3
- Discuss given scenario
- Discuss appropriate ways to deal with the situation
- Share (role play) and discuss with the group