Overview of Basic Behavior Principles

University of South Florida

Basic Behavior Principles

• Important to the success of your School-Wide System
• Often a philosophical or theoretical shift for school staff
• All staff (teachers, support, paras, custodial, assistants, etc.) should receive a brief training on the importance of understanding basic behavior principles

Application of PBS Principles

• Derived from nearly 50 years of research on individual students with problem behavior
• Based on research from Applied Behavior Analysis
• Applied at the:
  – individual student,
  – targeted group,
  – classroom, and
  – entire school level
Basic Behavior Principles

• Must know **why** behavior is occurring to develop an effective intervention plan

• When you understand **what** is happening at your school and **why** it is happening, your team will be able to change how things work (the system) to increase appropriate behavior and decrease inappropriate behavior

What is Behavior?

• ANYTHING we SAY or DO:
  • Focus on what is observable rather than intentions
  • HOW WE REACT to our environment
  • Behaviors are LEARNED and continue because they serve a PURPOSE or FUNCTION
  • We engage in behaviors because we have learned that a DESIRED OUTCOME occurs

Examples of Behavior

• School-Wide level example:
  • Middle school (6-8) with 1100 students, 3 administrators, and 40 staff. Teachers are inconsistent in writing ODR’s. Administration gives everyone ISS which is backlogged. When students go to ISS, they are not made to do anything; instead, they sit and talk to their friends
  • After lunch time, many students get ODR’s for being tardy to class (i.e., crossing the door of the classroom after the teacher has begun the lesson)
### Examples of Behavior

**Individual student level example:**

- Carolina is a 7th grade student performing at a 5th grade level
- Carolina swears, yells, throws chairs, and leaves the classroom. She often is out late at night hanging with her 16-year-old brother's friends. Carolina hates school and sees no point in going...

### Top Behavior Principles

1. **Understand the function (WHY) of behavior**
2. Understanding comes from observation of ABCs
3. Antecedents precede and increase the likelihood of behavior
4. Behavior tends to be repeated or discontinued because of the consequences/outcomes
5. Consequences should be consistent and immediate
6. Modeling can strengthen or weaken behavior

### Behavior Principle #1

**Understanding the function (WHY) of behavior is the first step in changing behavior:**

- Understanding allows us to:
  - Identify appropriate systems level changes
  - Target needed appropriate skills
  - Focus the reward system on the appropriate skills
  - Change consequences to match why the behavior is occurring
Behavior Principle #1

• **School-Wide level example:**
  – 50% of ODRs occur at lunchtime… Why?
    • Is there enough supervision?
    • Are those supervising doing their jobs?
    • Are there too many students?
    • Are the procedures in the cafeteria clear?

• **Individual student level example:**
  – Carolina averages 4 ODRs a week … Why?
    • She always gets 1 ODR on Monday
    • She is often removed from Math class
    • She never gets an ODR in P.E.
  – What questions need to be asked?
    • How does her academic performance in math compare to her other subjects?

Behavior Principle #2

• **Understanding why the behavior occurs comes from repeated observations of:**
  • Antecedents (event/stimulus before the behavior)
  • Behavior (the observable and measurable act)
  • Consequences (what occurs after the behavior that serves to maintain, increase, or decrease the frequency of behavior)
**Behavior Principle #2**

**School-Wide level example:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Antecedent</th>
<th>Behavior</th>
<th>Consequences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students must wait in long lines to get their lunch. When finished they are allowed to sit and talk rather than being made to go to class.</td>
<td>Students are tardy to class</td>
<td>The teacher says nothing and assists the students in finding the page they are working on</td>
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**Behavior Principle #2**

**Individual student level example:**

<table>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Carolina stayed out until 2 AM Sunday night. In Math, Carolina put her head down instead of doing her seat work. The teacher told her to get to work repeatedly.</td>
<td>Carolina swore and yelled at the teacher before throwing her chair and walking out of the classroom.</td>
<td>The SRO is called and escorts Carolina to the behavior specialist who then talks with her.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Behavior Principle #3**

- Antecedents are events that happen before the behavior and may increase the likelihood that behavior will occur.
- Identifying antecedents allow us to develop prevention strategies that make behavior unnecessary.
Types of Antecedents

- **Slow triggers** make it more likely behavior will occur:
  - Lack of sleep, hunger, illness
  - Week of standardized testing, holiday vacations, end of year, large gathering of students, etc.

- **Fast triggers** set off the behavior almost immediately:
  - Comment by a peer or teacher, difficulty of assignment, not getting your way
  - Fire drill, not having a signal indicating the start of class, late bus, etc.

Behavior Principle #3

- **School-Wide level example:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Antecedent</th>
<th>Prevention Strategies</th>
</tr>
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  | Students must wait in long lines to get their lunch. When finished they are allowed to sit and talk rather than being made to go to class | • Create procedures to move students through the line faster  
• Ensure staff are supervising and making students leave for class  
• Use a bell system to signal when lunch is over |

Behavior Principle #3

- **Individual student level example:**

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  | Carolina stayed out until 2 AM Sunday night. In Math, Carolina put her head down instead of doing her seat work. The teacher told her to get to work repeatedly. | • Give Carolina her assignment immediately upon entering the classroom, and tell her she can earn “quiet time” as soon as it’s completed.  
• Instead of repeated verbal cues (e.g., “nagging”), provide nonverbal cues to manage class time efficiently.  
• Change Carolina’s schedule so Math is during 3rd period, not 1st period. |
Behavior Principle #4

- Behavior tends to be repeated because of the consequence/outcome:
  - Behavior is learned. We do things again if the past has taught us that we might get the same result
  - What is the payoff? To get or get away from someone or something...
  - Consequences help us to identify the appropriate behavior we need to teach and reinforce, as well as a more appropriate consequence for the inappropriate behavior that does not result in a desired outcome

Behavior Principle #4a

- Behavior is likely to occur again when it is reinforced:
  - When a student gets something desirable following an inappropriate behavior, that behavior is strengthened and more likely to occur again
  - When a student gets something desirable following an appropriate behavior, that behavior is more likely to occur again

Behavior Principle #4b

- Behavior is weakened by withholding consequences (usually social) that have maintained it:
  - When a student does NOT get something desirable following an inappropriate behavior, the behavior is weakened and is LESS likely to occur again
  - When a student does NOT get something desirable following an appropriate behavior, that behavior is less likely to occur again
### Behavior Principle #4

**School-Wide level example:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Consequence</th>
<th>Appropriate Behavior</th>
<th>Revised Consequences (Appropriate &amp; Inappropriate Behavior)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The teacher says nothing and assists the students in finding the page they are working on… allowing them to spend more time talking to their friends and still complete the lesson.</td>
<td>Arriving to class on time</td>
<td>Students who are <strong>NOT</strong> tardy earn points allowing them to leave class 10 min. early on random Fridays.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Students who are tardy must complete an additional homework assignment</td>
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<td>Students who are tardy lose the opportunity to complete the bonus questions</td>
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<td>The SRO is called and escorts Carolina to the behavior specialist who then talks with her.</td>
<td>Completing her work &amp; asking for assistance if needed.</td>
<td>When Carolina completes her work, she is allowed to go talk to the behavior specialist.</td>
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<td>When Carolina asks for help, she can work with a peer or the teacher.</td>
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<td>When Carolina swears, throws chairs, and leaves class, she must sit in the behavior specialist's office and complete her work independently.</td>
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<td>Carolina is given visual cues as she completes her work showing progress towards collecting “down time”.</td>
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<td>Students who are tardy are handed a sheet of paper as they enter the classroom that describes an additional homework assignment they must complete.</td>
<td>When Carolina asks for help, she can immediately sit &amp; work with a peer or the teacher.</td>
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<td>Students who are tardy lose the opportunity to complete the bonus questions (bonus questions are removed from board).</td>
<td>When Carolina completes her work quietly, she immediately gets to take a break.</td>
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### Behavior Principle #5

**Consequences must consistently and immediately follow the behaviors they are meant to impact**

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Behavior Principle #6

- Behavior can be strengthened, weakened, and/or maintained by modeling:
  - Students may be less likely to be tardy when they see peers earning the opportunity to leave class early
  - Other students may be more likely to complete their work when they see Carolina leave and talk to the behavior specialist
  - Students are late to class because the teacher is late to class

Importance of Understanding Behavior

- These basic behavior principles lay the foundation that is necessary for developing an effective school-wide system
- Your team will need to understand behavior and help all of your school personnel to understand behavior

Principles of Behavior Activity

- Answer the following questions
- Try to provide examples different from the ones discussed in the overview presentation
- The answer to each question will appear in red after the mouse or arrow key is clicked
Behavior Activity

• Understanding the **FUNCTION** of behavior is the first step in changing behavior.

• What are the ABC’s of behavior:
  A = **ANTECEDENTS**
  B = **BEHAVIORS**
  C = **CONSEQUENCES**

Behavior Activity

• **ANTECEDENTS** are events that happen before the behavior.

• **CONSEQUENCES** are conditions that increase the likelihood behavior will occur.

Behavior Activity

• Give an example of a FAST Trigger:
  **A DIFFICULT MATH ASSIGNMENT, PROVOCATION, HAVING TO READ ALOUD**

• Give an example of a SLOW Trigger:
  **NOT GETTING ENOUGH SLEEP, MEDICATIONS, FAMILY DIFFICULTIES**
Behavior Activity

• All behaviors serve one of two functions: **ESCAPE** and **ATTENTION**

• Consequences must be delivered **CONSISTENTLY** and **IMMEDIATELY** in order to be effective

Behavior Activity

• Identify some strategies for dealing with appropriate behaviors (what can you do to increase desired behavior?)
  - SAY “GREAT JOB”, PROVIDE A REWARD (STICKER), AWARD A POINT, PUT NAME ON REWARD BOARD

• Identify some strategies for dealing with inappropriate behaviors (what can you do to decrease undesired behaviors?)
  - PRECORRECTION, VERBAL WARNING, MOVE DESK LOCATION, REFERRAL, CALL HOME

Behavior Activity

• Give one reason why a school should consider a “School-wide Positive Behavior Support” System
  - A school should consider SWPBS to create an overall positive school climate, decrease problem behavior throughout the school, increase staff and student satisfaction, create a universal and consistent discipline program, create a safe environment for learning and fun.
Contact Information and Resources

- FL - PBS Project
  - Phone: (813) 974-6440
  - Fax: (813) 974-6115
  - E-mail: flpbs@fmhi.usf.edu
  - State Website: http://flpbs.fmhi.usf.edu

- Online Behavior Training Tutorial
  - Online tutorial http://serc.gws.uky.edu/pbis

- OSEP Center on PBIS
  - National Website: http://www.pbis.org