

Crisis Management For Families

David Lennox, Ph.D.

Zachary Houston, M.S., BCBA

QBS, INC.

P.O. Box 6221
Holliston, MA 01746

www.QBSCompanies.com
www.SafetyCareTraining.com
A QBS Presentation

PH: 866-429-9211
FX: 508-429-9212

1

Assumptions

- Both families and clinicians are present
- The range of crises that families experience varies widely by type of behavior, frequency, intensity
- The degree of familiarity with behavioral analysis, principles & procedures, and crisis management varies widely

A QBS Presentation

2

Disclaimers, Cautions, Omissions

- General concepts and recommendations – some information may not pertain to your child or situation
- Other professional sources train on behavioral assessment, analysis, reinforcer selection, & other behavioral procedures
- Some information may not be new, but is essential to review
- Unable to demonstrate or train complex physical techniques

A QBS Presentation

3

Goals of this Presentation

- Provide information on some possible causes of “crisis” behaviors
- Review several basic strategies to prevent crisis behaviors from occurring
- Provide recommendations on minimizing or stopping crisis behaviors from escalating
- Initiate the development of a safety plan
- Methods for safety in some common situations
- What to do after a crisis has happened

A OBS Presentation

4

Contributors to Challenging Behavior

Contributor	Examples
Conditions	Autism/spectrum, developmental disability, cerebral palsy, acute or chronic pain, mental health conditions, other medical conditions
Symptoms & Impairment	Communication deficits, cognitive deficits, sensory deficits, memory deficits, social skills, explosive anger, stereotypic behaviors, overall limited repertoire
History	Emotional, physical, or sexual abuse; foster placements; family structure/dynamics, education

A OBS Presentation

5

Reinforcement

*If, under specific antecedent stimulus conditions, a behavior occurs which is followed by a positive (desirable) consequence,
...then, the next time the stimulus conditions are present, the response is more likely:*



A OBS Presentation

6

Reinforcement of Challenging Behavior

Antecedent → *Behavior* → *Consequence*

Parent exits room → *Tantrum* → *Parent returns & comforts*

"Pick up your toy" → *Aggression* → *"OK, never mind"*

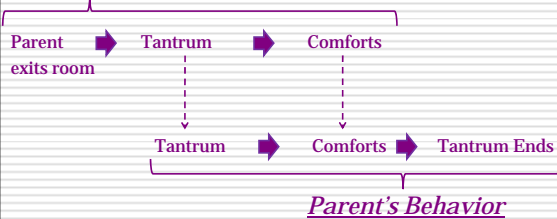
Boredom → *Hits head* → *Feels good*

A OBS Presentation

7

A Classic Behavioral Trap

Child's Behavior

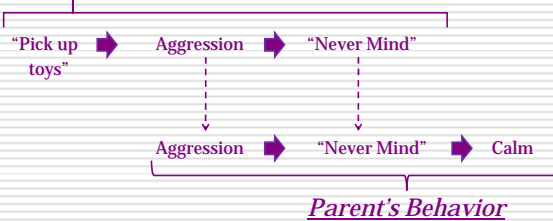


A OBS Presentation

8

A Classic Behavioral Trap

Child's Behavior



A OBS Presentation

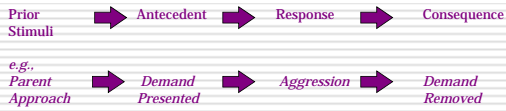
9

Escape-Avoidance Paradigm

Stage 1 - Escape Paradigm

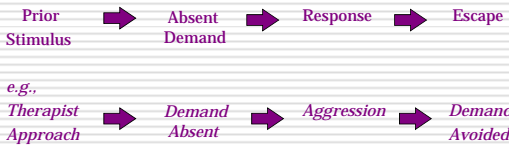


Stage 2 - Avoidance Development



Escape-Avoidance Paradigm

Stage 3 - Avoidance Paradigm



A OBS Presentation 12

Identifying the Motivation

What's the motivation?

Stimulus -> Response -> Consequence

Case 1

Social Deprivation -> Staff Close -> Aggression -> Restraint

Case 2

Social Deprivation -> Demand -> Aggression -> Restraint/
Removal

What are "Crisis Behaviors"

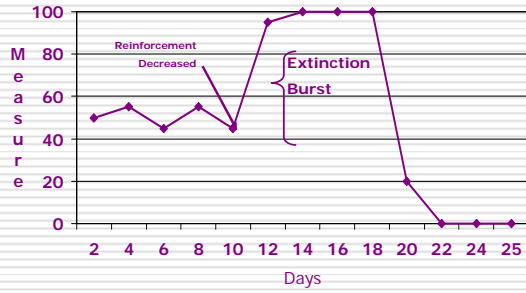
- Often unanticipated, new behavior
- Escalation beyond the scope of a behavior program – higher degree, intensity
- Probably the same causes as non-crisis challenging behaviors
 - ✓ Same triggers
 - ✓ Same reinforcers

Causes of "Crisis Behaviors"

Why now? What changed?

- Significant change in reinforcement
 - ✓ Frequency of reinforcement
 - ✓ Type of reinforcement
- Change/increase in demands, difficulty
- New Intervention(s)
 - ✓ New/change in behavioral program
 - ✓ New/change in medications
 - ✓ New/change in schedules, activities, locations
- Other conditions – e.g., medical

When Reinforcement Stops



16

Crisis Prevention Strategies

...are a combination of

- Environmental awareness & engineering
- Engaging in safe behaviors
- *Programming* a highly reinforcing environment

A OBS Presentation

17

Preventing Crises - General

- Minimize Disorganization, Clutter, Stimulation

Type	Examples
Clutter	Unnecessary furniture, decorations, tabletops
Loud Noises	T.V., barking dog, slamming doors, telephones
Crowds	Mealtimes, car rides, multiple visitors

- Dress Safely

Type	Examples
Loose Items	Neckwear, earrings, hair, iPods, neckties
Clothing	Flowing, loose garments, hoods, aprons
Footwear	Open-toed shoes, high heels, flip flops

A OBS Presentation

18

Preventing Crises – Safety Habits

- **Safe positioning**

- ✓ Know where your child is
- ✓ Know where the exits are
- ✓ Always be able to move away
- ✓ Avoid turning your back
- ✓ Careful with arms and legs

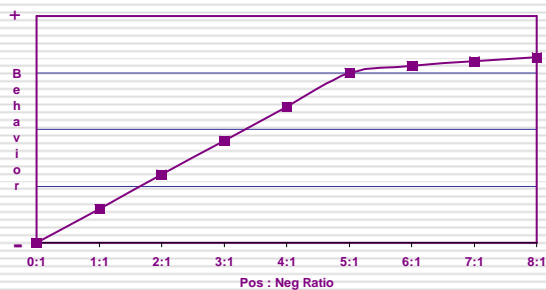
- **Manage your own behavior**

- ✓ How you communicate
- ✓ Facial expressions
- ✓ Proximity
- ✓ What you say
- ✓ Posture
- ✓ Movement

A OBS Presentation

19

Maximizing Reinforcing Events



20

Noncontingent Reinforcement

Noncontingent Reinforcement refers to the delivery of praise and other reinforcers on a regular basis, regardless of challenging behaviors.

Guidelines

1. Establish a time interval during which the child will be contacted, praised, and/or reinforced.
2. Develop a family mantra or 'rule' – e.g., '15-minute rule'.
3. Use timers and other devices as reminders;
4. Utilize frequently naturally-occurring events as reminders:
 - T.V. Commercials
 - Whenever someone stands up
 - Any time there is a topic change in conversation

21

Identifying Reinforcers

1. Reinforcement survey

Some [children] really enjoy looking at things such as a mirror, bright lights, shiny objects, spinning objects, TV, etc. What are the things you think [your child] most likes to watch?

RAISD (Fisher, W.W, Piazza, C.C, Bowman, L.G, Amari, A., 1996)

2. Observe behavior

3. Reinforcement preference assessment

- 1) Narrow down possible reinforcers to 4-5
- 2) Within a structured time, make them available
- 3) Measure the amount of time spent with each object

Crisis Minimization Strategies

...are a combination of

- Antecedent Analyses and Interventions
- Evidence-Based De-Escalation Strategies
- Developing and implementing a Family Safety Plan

Antecedent Analysis

Examples of Environmental Antecedents or "Triggers"

- Loud noise(s)
- Slamming doors
- Requests
- Crowded environment
- Teasing from siblings/peers
- Unexpected schedule change
- Request to "wait"
- Standing too close

Examples of Behavioral Antecedents or "Signals"

- Pacing
- Verbal warnings/threats
- Angry facial expression
- Fidgeting
- Staring
- Tapping/banging
- Muttering, humming
- Yelling

Antecedent Interventions

Target Behavior	Triggers and Signals	Prevention Plan	Intervention Plan
Self-Injury (Hand Biting)	<p>Triggers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Asked to "Clean up room" •Taking a preferred toy <p>Signals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Rapid pacing •Increased humming, whines 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Offer 2-3 choices •Offer alternative •Reinforce immediately •Behavioral Momentum 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Call for assistance •Prompt & reinforce request for break or object
Aggression (Hitting, punching)	<p>Triggers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Sister Yelling •Doorbell, dog barking <p>Signals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Clenched fists •Staring, visual fixation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Cue sister to quiet or leave area, or •Immediately remove child from area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Call for assistance •Reinforce any pause in signal •Reinforce for incompatible behaviors

Behavioral Momentum

An antecedent-based procedure that involves requesting several likely behaviors, immediately followed by the unlikely, but desirable behavior.

Guidelines

1. Identify 3-5 requests the child will follow – 100%;
2. Request the first, then quickly praise;
3. Request the second, then third, praising each;
4. Request the unlikely behavior, then praise and reinforce.

Behavioral Momentum Considerations

- Ensure highly likely behaviors;
- Ensure the reinforcers **are** reinforcers
- Discontinue if first request(s) don't generate compliance;
- Don't implement if challenging behaviors;
- Complimenting and Behavioral Momentum are not the same;

De-Escalation Strategies

- 1. Help Strategy**
 - Ask what child wants
 - Prompt/reinforce asking
 - Provide the 'want'
- 2. Prompt Strategy**
 - Reinforce Incompatibles
 - Prompt/reinforce "High P's"
- 3. Wait Strategy**
 - Safe monitoring positioning
 - Avoid reinforcing child

A QBS Presentation

Help Strategy

- May want something or want a change
- Ideal conditions to teach communication

Common requests include:

✓To be left alone	✓To stop a noise or other annoyance
✓Stop or break from a task	✓Social interaction, attention
✓Something to eat or drink	✓Preferred item or activity

Ways to communicate

✓Vocal, words	✓Gestures or sign language
✓Pointing to pictures	✓Stop working, move back

A QBS Presentation 29

Prompt Strategy

- Reinforce other, incompatible behaviors
- Refrain from reinforcing crisis behaviors

- 1. Observe and reinforce incompatible behaviors**

Presenting Behavior	Incompatible Behavior
Whining, weeping, yelling	Slow, paced, low volume speech
Fist clenching	Open, relaxed hands
Rocking, pacing	Sitting still; resting head
- 2. Prompt and reinforce high probability behaviors**

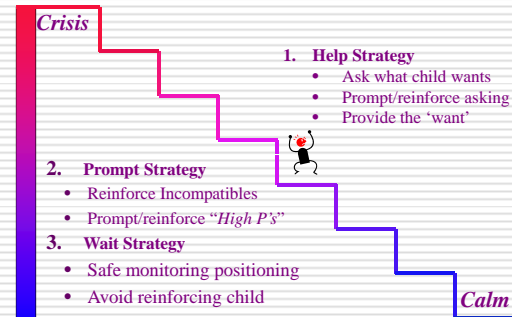
✓"Look at me"	✓"Raise your hand"
✓"Hold this"	✓"Step over here"

A QBS Presentation 30

Wait Strategy

- Refrain from reinforcing crisis behaviors
 - ✓ Minimize eye contact
 - ✓ Avoid any response to provocative behaviors
- Keep child, self, and others safe
 - ✓ Maintain safe distance
 - ✓ Request "distant" assistance
 - ✓ Consider "safe areas"
 - ✓ Secure any potentially dangerous objects
- Watch for change & opportunities for Help or Prompt

De-Escalation Strategies



Family Safety Plan – For Home

- **Emergency Contacts**
 - Who to call – family members, known neighbors, 911
 - When to call – triggers, signals, escalation
 - What to request – call others, attend to siblings, objects
- **Antecedent Intervention Plan**
- **Safe space for child and others**
- **Preparing the community**
- **Communicating with others during a crisis**
 - ✓ Present "Our Family Member" Card
 - ✓ Summary of situation
 - ✓ Best way to communicate
 - ✓ Tell them what you need.

Safety Plan – Away From Home

• Before Leaving

- ✓“Our Family Member” Card
- ✓Contract or reward system
- ✓Response priming, rehearsal
- ✓Preferred activities, materials

• During the Trip

- ✓Frequent reinforcement
- ✓Immediate response to antecedents
- ✓Positioning, safe seating
- ✓Plan to end trip, if necessary

• After the Trip

- ✓Praise and reinforcement
- ✓Follow-thru on contract, rewards
- ✓Analyze trip for future
- ✓Revise safety plan

Safe Sitting

Sitting in Front

- ✓ Maintain safe distance.
- ✓ Angle body at 45° to child.
- ✓ Hands positioned to block, if necessary.
- ✓ Chair and body positioned to quickly move away.
- ✓ Feet on floor

Sitting Behind

- ✓ Maintain safe distance
- ✓ Angle body & chair 45° to child
- ✓ Face/head out of head-butt range
- ✓ Elbow Check when possible
- ✓ Feet on floor

Sitting to the Side

- ✓ Maintain safe distance
- ✓ Angle body & chair 45° angle to child
- ✓ Use Elbow Check when appropriate
- ✓ Feet on floor

Sitting on the Floor

- ✓ Kneel, squat, or sit on stool
- ✓ Hands away from child's mouth
- ✓ Head to either side of child's head
- ✓ Ability to stand and evade quickly

Elbow Check

Use when:

- Approaching
- Working closely
- Blocking



Procedural Steps

1. Stand/sit to the side, facing same direction
2. Gently place closest “palmed” hand on child's arm, above elbow, fingers forward
3. Step back upon significant resistance

Bite Prevention

Situation	Avoidance
Holding hands	Keep your hand on bottom of child's hand; consider not holding hands when certain triggers occur or signals are present.
Leaning over child or reaching in front	Use Elbow Check; or step around instead of reaching.
Providing hand-over-hand guidance	Use Elbow Check; Remove hands when not guiding. Consider using hand-under-hand assistance when possible.
Standing close, exposing waist or stomach area	Use Elbow Check; Maintain distance

A OBS Presentation

37

Post Crisis Activities

- Documenting the event
 - ✓ Time, location, context, ongoing activity
 - ✓ Immediate Environmental Antecedents (Triggers)
 - ✓ Immediate Behavioral Antecedents (Signals)
 - ✓ Interventions attempted and outcome
- Analyzing event for good and bad practices
- Collaborating with your Behavioral Consultant
- Legal issues and responsibilities
- Contact with law enforcement and other agencies

A OBS Presentation

38
