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

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
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

Contributors to Challenging Behavior

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

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:

```
Antecedent —> Behavior —> Consequence

"Pick Up" —> Picks Toys Up —> "Alright, Great!"
Your Toy"
0-2 minutes
```
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 Classic Behavioral Trap

Child’s Behavior

Parent exits room → Tantrum → Comforts → Tantrum Ends

Parent’s Behavior

A Classic Behavioral Trap

Child’s Behavior

“Pick up toys” → Aggression → “Never Mind” → Calm

Parent’s Behavior
Escape-Avoidance Paradigm

Stage 1 - Escape Paradigm

- Antecedent → Response → Consequence
- e.g., Demand → Aggression → Demand

Stage 2 - Avoidance Development

- Prior Stimuli → Antecedent → Response → Consequence
- e.g., Parent Demand → Aggression → Demand

Stage 3 - Avoidance Paradigm

- Prior Response → Escape Stimulus
- e.g., Therapist Approach → Absent Demand

A QBS Presentation
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

![Graph showing the relationship between reinforcement and extinction]

Crisis Prevention Strategies

...are a combination of
- Environmental awareness & engineering
- Engaging in safe behaviors
- Programming a highly reinforcing environment

Preventing Crises - General

- Minimize Disorganization, Clutter, Stimulation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clutter</td>
<td>Unnecessary furniture, decorations, tabletops</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loud Noises</td>
<td>T.V., barking dog, slamming doors, telephones</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crowds</td>
<td>Meal times, car rides, multiple visitors</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Dress Safely

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Loose Items</td>
<td>Neckwear, earrings, hair, iPods, neckties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clothing</td>
<td>Flowing, loose garments, hoods, aprons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Footwear</td>
<td>Open-toed shoes, high heels, flip flops</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Preventing Crises – Safety Habits

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

- **Manage your own behavior**
  - How you communicate
  - What you say
  - Facial expressions
  - Posture
  - Proximity
  - Movement

Maximizing Reinforcing Events

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
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?

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

Examples of Behavioral Antecedents or “Signals”
- Pacing
- Verbal warnings/threats
- Angry facial expression
- Fidgeting
Antecedent Interventions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Target Behavior</th>
<th>Triggers and Signals</th>
<th>Prevention Plan</th>
<th>Intervention Plan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self-Injury (Hand Biting)</td>
<td>Asked to &quot;clean up room&quot; / Taking a preferred toy</td>
<td>Offer 2-3 choices / Other alternative</td>
<td>Call for assistance / Prompt &amp; reinforce request for break or object</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rapid pacing / Increased humming / whines</td>
<td>Reinforce immediately</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aggression (Hitting, punching)</td>
<td>Sister yelling / Doorbell, dog barking</td>
<td>Cue sister to quiet or leave area, or immediately remove child from area</td>
<td>Call for assistance / Reinforce any pause in signal / Reinforce for incompatible behaviors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Clenched fists / Staring, visual fixation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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;
Crisis 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

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

Prompt Strategy

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

1. Observe and reinforce incompatible behaviors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Presenting Behavior</th>
<th>Incompatible Behavior</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Whining, weeping, yelling</td>
<td>Slow, paced, low volume speech</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fist clenched</td>
<td>Open, relaxed hands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rocking, pacing</td>
<td>Sitting still; resting head</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Prompt and reinforce high probability behaviors

- “Look at me”
- “Raise your hand”
- “Hold this”
- “Step over here”
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

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

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-through 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 to the Side**
- Maintain safe distance.
- Angle body & chair 45° angle to child.
- Use Elbow Check when appropriate.
- 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 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**

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

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**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