Behavior reduction using differential reinforcement and alternative skill acquisition procedures

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**Behavior reduction**

Plans for reducing any behavior should always emphasize the following 2 considerations:

- What should this person do *instead* of the target beh?
- Why would he/she engage in that alternative beh?

**FUNCTION**

**Behavior reduction**

Emphasis on *functions* of behavior in applied settings

- appropriate: language, social, excesses
- inappropriate: tantrums, aggression

**IT'S ALL BEHAVIOR**

**Measurement**

What behaviors to measure?

- Behavior reduction (e.g., self-injury, aggression, etc.)
- Skill acquisition (e.g., language, attention, cognitive abilities, etc.)
Behavior reduction

Why are various and detailed measurements important?

- Diagnostics (e.g., antecedents, consequences, times of day, etc.) – useful for developing & adjusting programs
- Evaluation (e.g., frequency, intensity, duration) – useful for determining effectiveness of current strategies

Measurement / Diagnostics

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Integrated Behavioral Solutions  www.ibs.cc
Behavior Management
Identifying functions can help you in 3 ways:
1. Identify antecedents (eliminate or increase?)
   - Increase antecedents that evoke positive behavior
   - Decrease antecedents that evoke negative behavior

2. Identify consequences that maintain behavior (eliminate or increase?)
   - Positive reinforcement: Increase consequences that maintain positive behavior (particularly incompatible behavior).
   - Extinction: Decrease consequences that maintain negative behavior.

3. Identify and target functionally-equivalent behavior
   - Teach/reinforce replacement behavior (i.e., social skills)
   - Reinforcement related to function
Behavior Management

Increasing behavior
- Reinforcement: A consequence that increases the probability of the behavior it follows
  Optimum conditions:
  - Contingent
  - Immediate
  - Appropriate to the person

Decreasing behavior
- Extinction: Decreasing the probability of a behavior by removing reinforcement for the target behavior
  Optimum conditions:
  - Prepare for extinction “burst”
  - Use in combination w/ R+ procedure
Behavior Management

Decreasing behavior

- Differential reinforcement: Provide reinforcement for some behaviors and not for others
  - DRO: \( R^+ \) for zero rates of behavior
  - DRA: \( R^+ \) for alternative behaviors
  - DRI: \( R^+ \) for incompatible behaviors
  - DRL: \( R^+ \) for low rates of behavior

Behavior Management

- What about punishment?
  - Should not be primary tx strategy
  - Effects diminish when threat decreases
  - Does not teach what you SHOULD do
  - Makes interaction less functional

Reinforcement vs. Bribery

Reinforcement:
Instruction → Behavior → \( R^+ \)

Bribery:
\( R^+ \) offer → Instruction → Behavior
(i.e., “I’ll give you [this] if you do [this].”)
Reinforcement vs. Bribery

Avoid using rewards as bribes.

- Avoid telling student in advance about the R+ he/she will receive (dangling a carrot).

- Avoid using rewards as bribes.

- Do not remind the student of R+ he/she would be getting if disruptive behaviors were not occurring (or will get if disruptive behaviors cease).

- Do not offer additional R+ if behaviors escalate in an attempt to calm him/her down.