Discipline in Schools

Behaviour intervention strategies and potential solutions for behavioural challenges

Why do behavioural challenges occur?

- All problem behaviour is a function of its environment. All we have at birth is our reflexes. Everything else is learned.

- The procedures in this presentation are based in research.

Behaviour at its root

- A – B – C
  - A = Antecedent = what happens before the behaviour
  - B = Behaviour
  - C = what happens after the behaviour

What will happen to the behaviour?

- Johnny wants a sweet – Johnny cries – Johnny's mom gives him a sweet
- Johnny wants a sweet – Johnny cries – Johnny's mom ignores the crying and does not give him a sweet
- Johnny wants a sweet – Johnny says "may I have a sweet please mom?" – Johnny's mom gives him a sweet
- Johnny wants a sweet – Johnny says "may I have a sweet please mom?" – Johnny's mom ignores his request and does not give him a sweet
- Johnny wants a sweet – Johnny steals a sweet – Johnny gets to eat his sweet

Using your ABCs

- To increase desirable behaviour, or to decrease undesirable behaviour, change the As and Cs!

- You first have to know WHY the behaviour is occurring, otherwise you will not know how to correctly change the As and Cs.

Functions of Behaviour

- Access to Tangible

- Attention

- Escape

- Automatic

- Control

- The function will influence the antecedent and consequence strategies that you select

Antecedent strategies for the individual

- Differential reinforcement of alternative behaviour

- Differential reinforcement of other behaviour

- Differential reinforcement of incompatible behaviour

- Visual schedules

- Token systems

- Point systems

Antecedent strategies for the individual

- Transition cues
- Non-contingent reinforcement
- Demand fading
- Behavioural momentum
- Environmental manipulation

Consequence manipulations

- Do not let the child get what he/she wants from the behaviour

- Always try reinforcement-based procedures first

- Even when using punishment procedures, be sure to include plenty of opportunities for accessing reinforcement

- Punishment procedures:

  - Time-out

    - Common mistake!

  - Response cost

What establishes behaviour

- Continuous reinforcement

- Strongest consequences are positive, immediate, and certain

- What behaviour do you want to reinforce?

What maintains behaviour?

- Intermittent reinforcement

- Remember, this applies to undesirable and desirable behaviour

Contingency Contracting

- Teachers can employ contracting to address specific discipline, performance, and academic challenges.

- Examples in the research: percentage of capitalization and punctuation marks, reduction of disruptive behaviour (being off-task, refusals to comply with work instructions, fighting with peers, tantrums), homework completion.

Contingency Contracting

- Contracting is usually more effective when all of the parties involved play an active role in developing the contract.

- Step 1: Hold a meeting

- Step 2: Fill out a form for:

  - Self-identification of possible tasks for contingency

  - Identifying potential contracting tasks for others

  - Self-identification of possible rewards for contingency

- Step 3: Write contracts

Contingency Contracting

- Considerations:
- Is this an appropriate intervention?
  - Nature of the desired behaviour change (decrease or increase?)
  - Verbal and conceptual skills of the participant
  - The individual's relationship with the person(s) with whom the contract will be made
  - Available resources
- Is the target behaviour(s) already in the person's repertoire?
- Is the person willing to engage in the process?

Contingency Contracting

- A good contract is:
  - Fair (difficulty vs reward)
  - Clear (explicit)
  - Honest (reward or don't reward, as it says)
  - Builds in several layers of rewards (add bonuses for exceeding expectations)
  - May have a response cost contingency (if necessary)
  - Visible (public posting)
  - Can be renegotiated (if not working, reconsider)
  - Is ultimately terminated (means to an end, not an end product)

Figure 5 A form for identifying potential contracting tasks for others.

List B   Name: Bobby

THINGS Bobby DOES TO HELP THE FAMILY	OTHER WAYS Bobby COULD HELP THE FAMILY
1. Vacuums when asked	1. Put his dirty clothes in hamper
2. Makes his bed	2. Do homework at night without being asked
3. Reads stories to little sister	3. Make his own sandwiches for his school lunch
4. Empties trash	4. Clean and sponge off table after supper
5. Rakes leaves	5. _____
6. _____	6. _____
7. _____	7. _____

Figure 6 A form for self-identification of possible rewards for contingency contracts.

List C Name: Sue Ann

MY FAVORITE THINGS, ACTIVITIES, AND SPECIAL TREATS

1. Listening to records
2. Movies
3. Playing pinball
4. Miniature golf
5. Swimming
6. Ice skating
7. Ice cream sundaes
8. Aquarium and fish
9. Picnics
10. Coin collection
11. Riding a horse
12. Fishing with Dad
13. _____
14. _____
15. _____

Figure 4 A form for self-identification of possible tasks for contingency contracts.

List A   Name: Jean

Things I Do to Help My Family	Other Ways I Could Help My Family and Myself
1. Feed Queenie and Chipsy	1. Be on time for supper
2. Clean up my bedroom	2. Turn off the lights when I leave a room
3. Practice my piano	3. Dust the living room
4. Wash dishes	4. Clean up the back yard
5. Help Dad with the laundry	5. Hang up my coat when I get home from school
6. _____	6. _____
7. _____	7. _____

Token Economies

- The scientific version of the "star chart"
  - Common mistake!
- Step 1: Select tokens that will act as a medium of exchange
- Step 2: Identify target behaviours and rules
- Step 3: Select a menu of back-up reinforcers
- Step 4: Establish a ratio of exchange
- Step 5: Write and explain procedures

Token Economies

- Fading out:
  - Fade the physical evidence (e.g. poker chips, to slips of paper, to tally marks on an index card, to the teacher keeping the index card, to index card not being visible/checkable, to no system)

- Tips:
  - Keep the initial ratios low
  - As token-earning behaviours and income increase, increase the cost of backup items, devalue tokens, and increase the number of backup items

Group Contingencies

- A group contingency is one in which a common consequence (usually, but not necessarily, a reward intended to function as reinforcement) is contingent on the behaviour of one member of the group, the behaviour of part of the group, or the behaviour of everyone in the group.

- Three types:
  - Dependent
  - Independent
  - Interdependent

Group Contingencies

- Advantages:
  - Saves time, as one consequence is delivered to all members of a group rather than administering consequences to each member individually
  - Can be effective and economical, requiring fewer practitioners or less time to implement
  - Can be used in situations where individual contingencies are impractical
  - Can be used with limited knowledge of the reinforcement histories of the learners
  - Can be used when problem must be resolved quickly (e.g. serious disruptive behaviour) and when there is an interesting in building appropriate behaviour, too.
  - Capitalizes on peer influence or peer monitoring, because it sets the occasion for peers to act as change agents.
  - Can support positive social interactions and positive behavioural supports within the group.

Group Contingencies

- Consider using when:
  - Group of persons share certain problem
  - Unrealistic to set up individual programmes
  - Difficult to identify the person responsible for the problem behaviour
  - Singling out one person to reward may cause problems with peers

Group Contingencies - Independent

- A contingency is presented to all members of a group, but reinforcement is delivered only to those group members who meet the criterion outlined in the contingency.

- Frequently combined with contingency contracts or token economies.

- Example:
  - Any child in the class who gets at least 90% on her or his weekly math quiz will get to pick an item from the treasure chest on Friday afternoon.

Group Contingencies - Dependent

- The reward for the whole group is dependent on the performance of an individual or small group.

- If an individual (or small group within the total group) performs a behaviour to a specific criterion, the group shares the reinforcer.

- If the individual performs below the criterion, the reward is not delivered.

- AKA the "hero procedure"

Group Contingencies - Dependent

- Example:
  - If Greg stays calm during P.E. class all five days of the week, he will earn a pizza party for his entire class for Friday at lunch time.

- Advantage: This procedure can facilitate positive interactions among students because the class as a whole benefits from the improved behaviour of the student targeted for the group contingency.

- Possible disadvantage: Peer pressure on the "hero" may be negative or lead to retaliation if the reward is not earned.

Group Contingencies - Interdependent

- All members of a group must meet the criterion of the contingency before any member earns the reward.

- These contingencies yoke students to achieve a common goal, thereby capitalizing on peer pressure and group cohesiveness.

- The contingency can be delivered (a) when the group as a whole meets the criterion, (b) when the group achieves a mean group score, or (c) based on the results of the Good Behaviour Game. Another variation is to randomly select a member of the group each time the criterion is evaluated.

- In any case, it is an "all or none" arrangement.

Group Contingencies - Interdependent

- Examples:
  - Teacher gives students 15 minutes to complete a math assignment. Teacher selects a student assignment at random. If that student's assignment meets a 90% accuracy criterion, all students earn a 5 minute break.

  - Children are taught social skills, e.g. how to cooperate with each other, how to be kind. During break, children are given elastic loops they can affix to their wrists every time they are spotted engaging in a pro-social behaviour. When they return to class, they put the loops in a can on the teacher's desk. When the can is full, the group earns a reinforcer.

  - Children are split into two or more teams. They are told that whichever group has the fewest marks against it at the end of the game will earn a reinforcer. Game conditions can be in effect during certain lessons (e.g. math or reading) or throughout the day. Marks against the team are made contingent upon undesired behaviours (e.g. shouting out).

Group Contingencies - Interdependent

Advantage	Disadvantage
Group average: Group members may continue to work hard to meet criterion even when they see peers failing to meet the criterion Random selection: As it is uncertain who will be selected as the person to be evaluated, all members may work harder and try to meet the criterion	Standard: As soon as peers see one member failing to meet the criterion, some or all of them may stop working to meet the criterion. Group average: Some group members may become "free riders"

Group Contingencies

- Considerations:
  - Choose an effective reward
  - Determine the behaviour to change and any collateral behaviours that might be affected
  - Set appropriate performance criteria
  - Combine with other procedures when appropriate
  - Select the most appropriate group contingency
  - Monitor individual and group performance

Self-management

- The personal application of behaviour change tactics that produces a desired change in behaviour. This broad definition encompasses one-time self-management events (e.g. taping a note to your closet door to remind you to wear your grey suit the next day), as well as complex, long-running self-directed behaviour change programmes in which a person plans and implements one or more contingencies to change his behaviour.

- Self-management is a relative concept. A behaviour change programme may entail a small degree of self-management or be totally conceived, designed, and implemented by the person.

Self-management

- Advantages:
  - Can influence behaviours not accessible to external change agents
  - External change agents often miss important instance of behaviour
  - Can promote the generalization and maintenance of behaviour change
  - A small repertoire of self-management skills can control many behaviours
  - People with diverse abilities can learn self-management skills

Self-management

- Advantages:
  - Some people perform better under self-selected tasks and performance criteria
  - People with good self-management skills contribute to more efficient and effective group environments
  - Teaching students self-management skills provides meaningful practice for other areas of the school curriculum
  - Self-management is an ultimate goal of education
  - Self-management benefits society
  - Self-management is empowering

Self-management

- Strategies:
  - Dedicating a specific environment for a desired behaviour (e.g. study spot – can also modify multipurpose setting)
  - Limiting undesired behaviour to restricted conditions (e.g. sulking stool – response effort)
  - Removing items necessary for an undesired behaviour (e.g. distracting items such as cellphones)
  - Performing the initial steps of a behaviour chain (e.g. holding homework diary instead of packing it away)
  - Providing response prompts (e.g. sticky note)
  - Manipulating motivations (e.g. brain breaks – not one size fits all, though)

Self-monitoring

Self-monitoring Guidelines

- Provide materials that make it easy

- Do it immediately, early in a response chain, and often

- Reinforce accurate self-monitoring

- Promote self-reinforcement

Questions?