A Functional Approach to Functional Analysis

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Why are we here?

- What brings us to a session on analyzing behavior?

- What are we hoping to learn?

- What do we want to walk away with?

Functional Analysis of Behavior

method of identifying antecedents to behavior and consequences following behavior

Antecedents – those things that occur before the behavior

Consequences – those things that happened because of the behavior

Understanding Behavior: Basics

- Basic philosophical believe:

All Behavior is Communicative

Behavior is used to communicate about . . .

- Things they want

    - Tangibles
        - Items, access to items (I want it and I want it right now!)

    - Attention
        - From peers
        - From adults

- Things they don't want

  - Avoidance/Escape

    - Don't like, aren't motivated by the task/activity
    - Task is too hard or perceived to be too hard
    - Perceived upcoming consequence/outcome to an event, action, decision

- Expression of feelings or emotions

  - Frustration

    - Anger scale

      Disappointment   confusion   frustration   fear   anger   hostility

Skills vs. Performance Based Deficits

- Skills Based Deficit – Behaviors occur because a individual does not understand or have the skills to behavior more appropriately.

  - A individual may act aggressively when frustrated because he/she does not have the communication skills to use to appropriately communicate building frustration.

- Performance Based Deficit – The individual understands and has the skills to behave appropriately but fails to do so.

  If you talk to the individual after the incident has occurred, he/she can tell you all the things they could or should have done instead of the inappropriate behavior.

  * An individual with ADD impulsively shoves another individual who gets in his/her way.

In both instances the behavior is not ignored but rather addressed from the appropriate angle
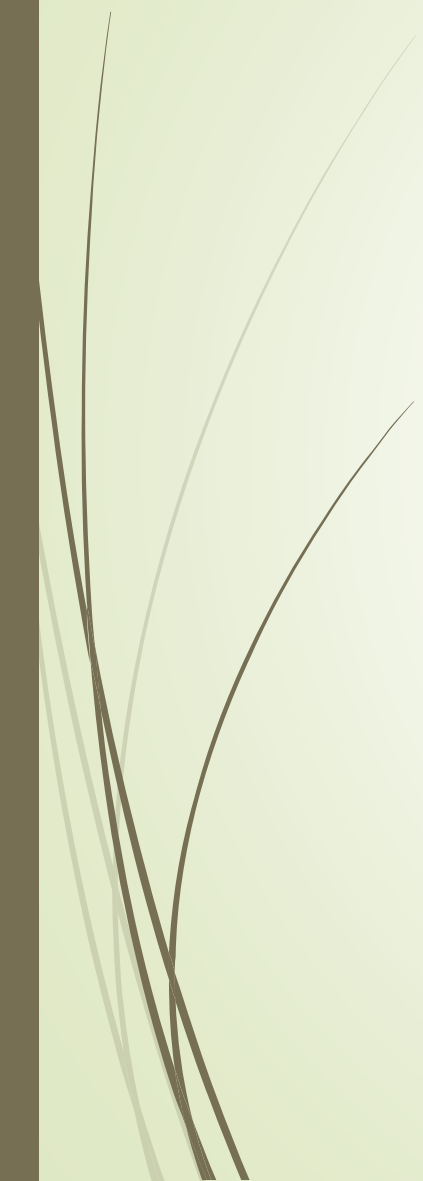
One of either teaching new skills to replace inappropriate behavior

or

Using techniques that motivate and reinforce efforts in using behaviors they know are appropriate thus decreasing inappropriate behavior.

Analyzing Behavior

- Iceberg Approach – provides a practical understanding of basic approach to understanding behavior

- ABC Analysis – provides a formal approach to analyzing behavior for the purpose of understanding what causes the behavior and what supports the continuation of the behavior.
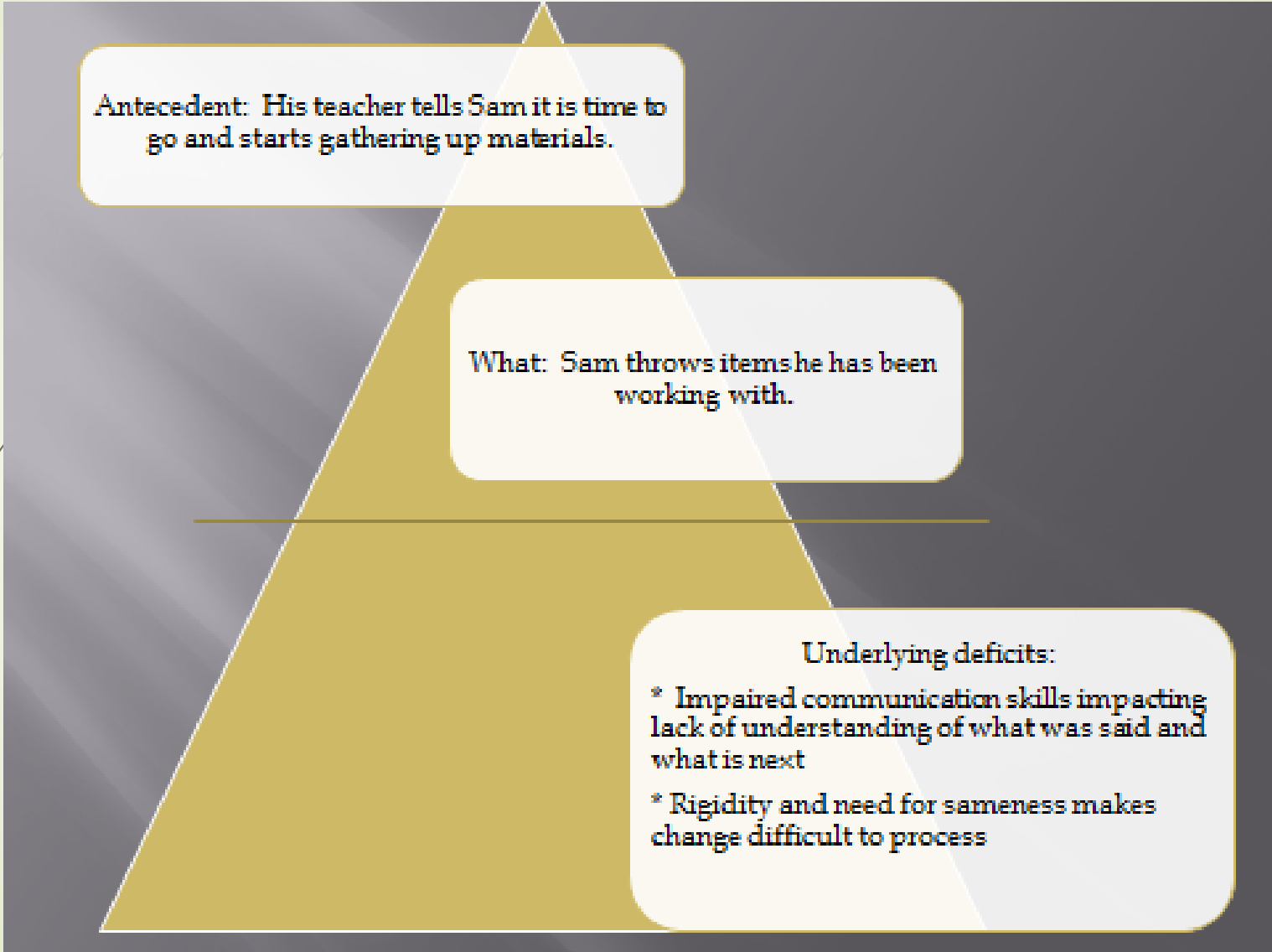
Antecedent: His teacher tells Sam it is time to go and starts gathering up materials.

What: Sam throws items he has been working with.

Underlying deficits:

* Impaired communication skills impacting lack of understanding of what was said and what is next

* Rigidity and need for sameness makes change difficult to process

Activity:

Working through samples together

Work with an idea with someone near you.

8 Principles that represent the foundation of current strategies

1. Behaviors are learned and serve a communicative intent

   Application: We will continue behaviors that are reinforced (if whining gets me the someone's attention then I will continue whining to get attention) and stop behaviors that aren't or have a negative consequence.
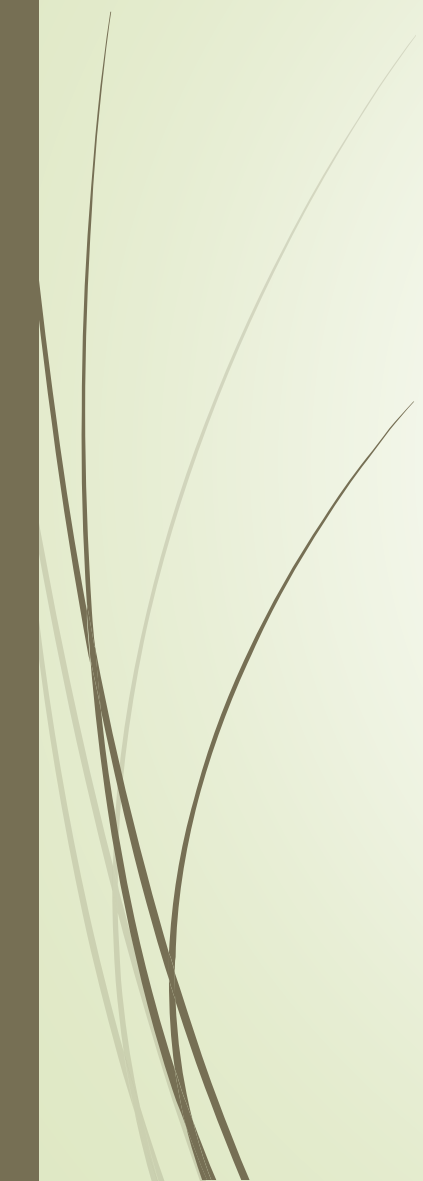
2. Most behavior are stimulus – specific

Application: An individual may learn that at home, a tantrum gets them what they want whereas at school or work it doesn't. Thus more tantrums happen at home.

3.   Behaviors can be taught

Application: Since they can be taught and we are in the business of teaching, it should be a major focus in programs.

4. When working to change behaviors, we are most effective when we communicate a clear goal with specifically outlined strategies.
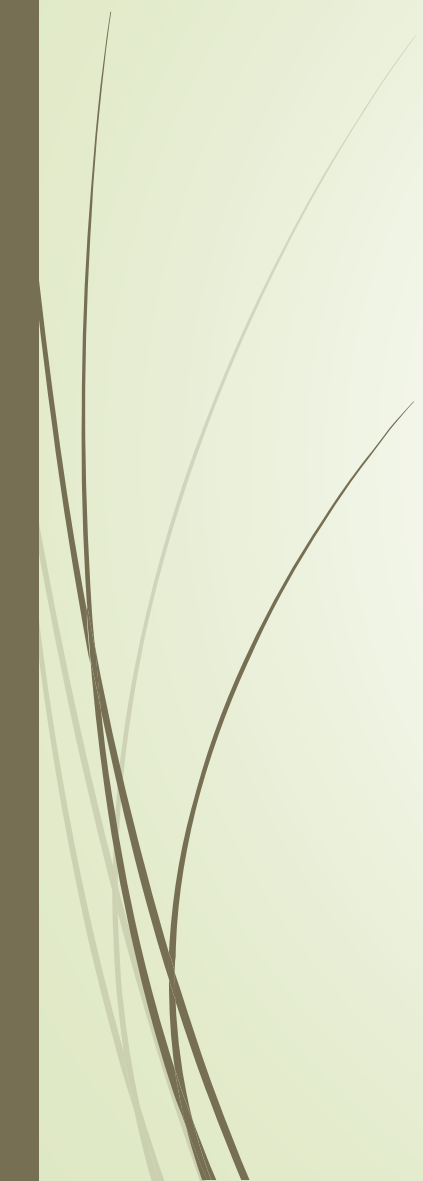
Application: Functional Behavior Analysis process

Individually Crafted Intervention Plans

Positive Behavioral Supports

5. To be successful, supports need to be individualized to a specific student's needs.
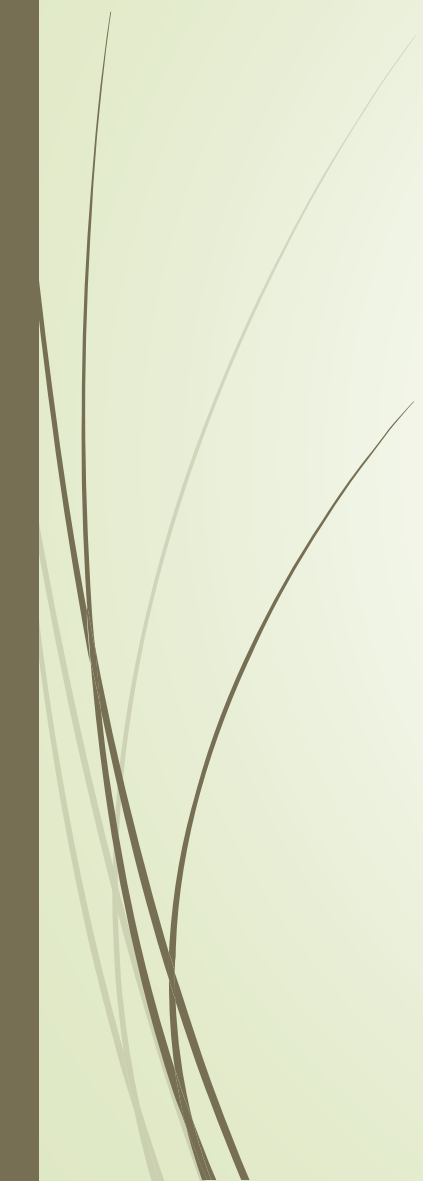
Application: Recognition that at this level of intervention, typical strategies used have probably been ineffective in meeting this child's needs.

6. Plans need to be based on the present situation

Application: While it is important to know the individual's history, that history can't be changed. The same can be said about knowing the individual's current situation outside of the facility. Rather, the team needs to focus on what is currently happening in the current environment.

7. Programming needs to focus on the child's interactions within the environment and what function the behavior serves at that moment.

Application: We need to be able to quickly "triage" situations to determine this and be proactive in meeting individual's needs.

8. Reinforcement and Positive Supports are primary focus of plan

Application: An important consideration then is what is happening in the environment that is contributing to the behavior and how to impact this.

Functional Analysis and Positive Behavioral Supports

3 stages:

1. Beginning:
   - Determining target behavior
2. Analyzing behavior
3. Developing a plan

Beginning

Unfortunately, individuals with behavior concerns often demonstrate several maladapted behaviors.

Sometimes not – but most often, yes.

Direct behavioral observation is needed to determine where to start.

Goal: To determine the Target Behavior for which interventions will be developed.

Important – it is extremely difficult to have multiple plans addressing multiple problems going at the same time.

It is essential to accurately define the behavior so this doesn't happen.

example

Tony often leaves his work, gets in others space interrupting their work and taking things that are not his.

Rather than addressing each of these separately, what do you think is the overlying behavior behind these?

Perhaps the work is not meaningful and rewarding to Tony so he leaves his work area to find something of more interest that he finds rewarding.

The plan than would be to start by adjusting his work and building in meaning so that he stays at his work longer (thus no longer feels the need to get up nor want other's things which gets him in trouble).

How to prioritize target behavior

Consider –

How dangerous is the behavior to self or others?

How interfering is it to the student or others?

Does it interfere with the individual's social acceptance causing isolation from peers?

If you address this behavior will positive outcomes affect each of these areas?

Remember, behavior can be

Overt – something that the individual physically does or says

or

Covert- something the individual doesn't do what he/she should be doing like following directions or passive behavior

Target Behaviors are determined from a variety of sources:

Staff data

Team collaboration

Documented History (referrals, behavior slips etc.)

Observation

Step 1

Observing the individual and recording what you see

Anecdotal record: narrative of what is actually seen

The first couple of observation you make, take specific notes on what you see.

ABC Analysis

A = Antecedent

What happened right before the behavior occurred?

B = Behavior

The exact behavior that occurred (should be a verb). Avoid subjective descriptions to describe the behavior.

C = Consequence

What happened following the behavior? This is not to be confused with a punishment but rather thought of in a broader sense of the immediate event resulting from the behavior.

Sample:

Antecedent	Behavior	Consequence
Tony entered the room and approached a desk JM had already sat down to work at.	Tony shoved JM's work off the desk onto the floor and sat down.	JM picked up the materials and went and sat at another seat.

By completing several of these on an individual, one can determine what are the setting events for the behavior and what are the consequences.

example: Tony wanted a desk, got the desk

What was the communicative intent of the behavior?

example: Tangible – wanted something (desk)

Inadvertent Reinforcement

- Often times behavior is accidentally or inadvertently reinforced.

- example: Tony was not held accountable for behavior – admonishment didn't really require him to change his behavior. If this continued, he would learn that, he gets what he wants through demand/aggression.

What to watch for during observations

Frequency – how often a behavior occurs

Duration – how long a behavior lasts

Intensity or magnitude – force or strength of the behavior (very strong – very weak)

Latency – amount of time it takes for a student to begin a behavior once a direction is given

Rate – frequency of behavior divided by number minutes observed (yields a rate per minute or rate per hour measurement)

Next Step

■ Once data is taken and a picture of what is going on is made

    1. Plan needs to be written that is specific and measurable.

    2. Data needs to be taken to ensure progress.

    3. Plan needs to be modified as needed to ensure

      progress.

Basic Plan

- Goal: Tom will sign "please" as a means of requesting something he wants.

- Replacement Skills To Be Taught:
    - Learning to sign please
    - Recognizing when to use the sign

- Modifications to Environment:

  - Initial stage –

    staff support to model use of sign

    contrived opportunities for success

■ Strategies:

1. Tom will be taken into the rec room where someone will be seated at his favorite table.

2. Staff will approach the table with Tom.

3. Staff will model and assist Tom in signing and saying "Can I sit here please."

4. When person seated moves, Tom will be allowed to sit down and will be told good job for asking please.

- Positive Reinforcement:

Tom will be told "good job for asking Please."

Tom will be able to sit at his preferred spot.

- Consequences:

If Tom becomes verbally or physically aggressive he will be assisted to leave the rec room and return to work.

Conclusion

- Questions?