

TACKLING THE CHALLENGES OF ADOLESCENTS INVOLVED IN THERAPY: BEHAVIOR MODIFICATION

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And many others...



Goals for the next hour...

- Normalize difficulty
- Why so difficult?
- What do we do? What do we tell caregivers to do?
- ...if we have time, we will problem solve some cases

Tell me about it...

Adolescent Development

- Puberty
- Abstract Cognitive Abilities
- Egocentric Ideas
- Reasoning Abilities
- Social Focus
- Risky Behavior
- Identity Formation
- Autonomy

Kohlberg's Stages of Moral Development

- Level I – Preconventional Morality
 - *Stage 1 – Obedience and Punishment Orientation*
 - What will happen to me?
 - Avoid punishment
 - Morality as something external; something grownups say they must do

 - *Stage 2 – Individualism and Exchange*
 - Multiple viewpoints from authority figures
 - Relativistic, so pursue own individual interests
 - Satisfy own needs
 - Avoid punishment because it is a risk of disobedience
 - Fair exchange – “scratch my back and I’ll scratch your’s”

Kohlberg's Stages of Moral Development

- Level II – Conventional Morality
 - *Stage 3 – Good Interpersonal Relationships*
 - Some internalization of standards
 - Believe people should live up to expectations and behave in “good” ways
 - “Good” = good motives and interpersonal feelings (love, empathy, trust, concerns for others)
 - Avoid rejection
 - Decisions based on perceived shared attitude of community
 - *Stage 4 – Maintaining the Social Order*
 - Concerned with society as a whole – obeying laws, respecting authority, behave to maintain social order

Kohlberg's Stages of Moral Development

- Level III – Postconventional Morality
 - *Stage 5 – Social Conduct and Individual Rights*
 - Internalizing standards
 - All rationale people agree on two points – basic rights (liberty and life) and democratic process
 - More of an effort to independently think out what society ought to value
 - *Stage 6 – Universal Principles*
 - Impartiality to all sides, respecting the basic dignity of others as individuals
 - Principles of justice are universal and apply to all
 - Empathy and perspective taking
 - Civil disobedience when individual rights are at stake

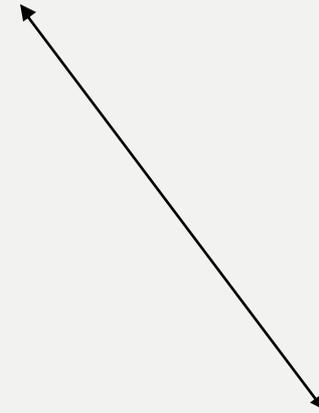
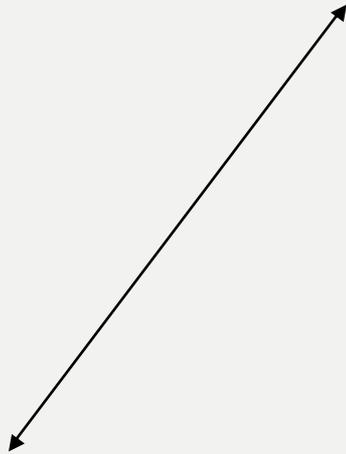
Typical development + moral development + trauma = ????

- Resources devoted to survival instead of development
- Child disconnected or aggressive
- Difficulty regulating emotions
 - Ranges from constricted to explosive
 - Numbing, avoidance, substance use
- Expressive and receptive language
- Problem solving
- Attention
- Abstract reasoning
- Poor school performance
- Trauma interferes with integration of right and left hemispheres
- Cannot think rationally when emotionally overwhelmed
- React to stress with helplessness, confusion, withdrawal, or rage
 - Response to helplessness or powerlessness
 - Deficits in executive functioning (planning, organizing, stopping before acting, controlling behavior)
- See themselves as ineffective, helpless, deficient, unlovable
- Blame themselves
- Problem seeking and accepting social support

So, how does it play out?

■ Adolescent thoughts

- *I'm bad*
- *No one can be trusted*
- *Grown ups are not safe*
- *I don't deserve positive things*



■ Adolescent feels

- *Anxious*
- *Angry*
- *Clingy*
- *Confused*
- *Distant*
- *Defiant*

■ Adolescent behaviors

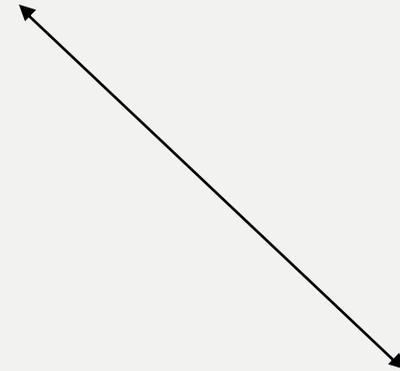
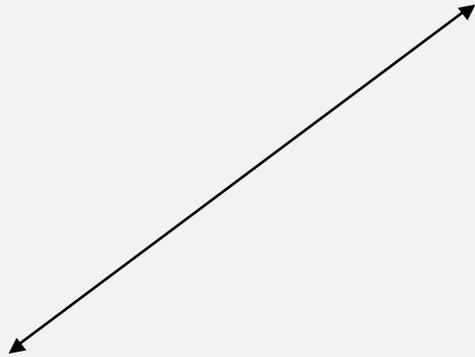
- *Risk taking*
- *Aggression*
- *Oppositionality*
- *Shutting down/poor communication*



How do caregivers respond?

■ Caregiver feeling

- Self-blaming
- Overwhelmed
- Overprotective
- Hypervigilant



■ Caregiver thoughts

- I need to give my child everything because they were harmed.
- I feel bad for because I let them get hurt.
- I'm helpless. There's nothing I can do to stop this

■ Caregiver behavior

- Let them do anything
- Highly restrictive
- Argumentative
- High expectations



So, What's the Big Ideal?

Nurturing
Interactions

Appropriate
Limits

What Can Happen to Balance after Trauma?

High
Nurturing

Low
Limits

What Can Happen to Balance after Trauma?

Low
Nurturing

High
Limits

Now let's put it all together

- High limits-----goes against developmental desire for autonomy
- Low nurturing-----might reinforce teen's unbalanced thinking

- How does this look in real-life?
- What are caregivers saying to us?

THE IMPORTANCE OF ASSESSMENT IN MANAGING CHALLENGING BEHAVIOR



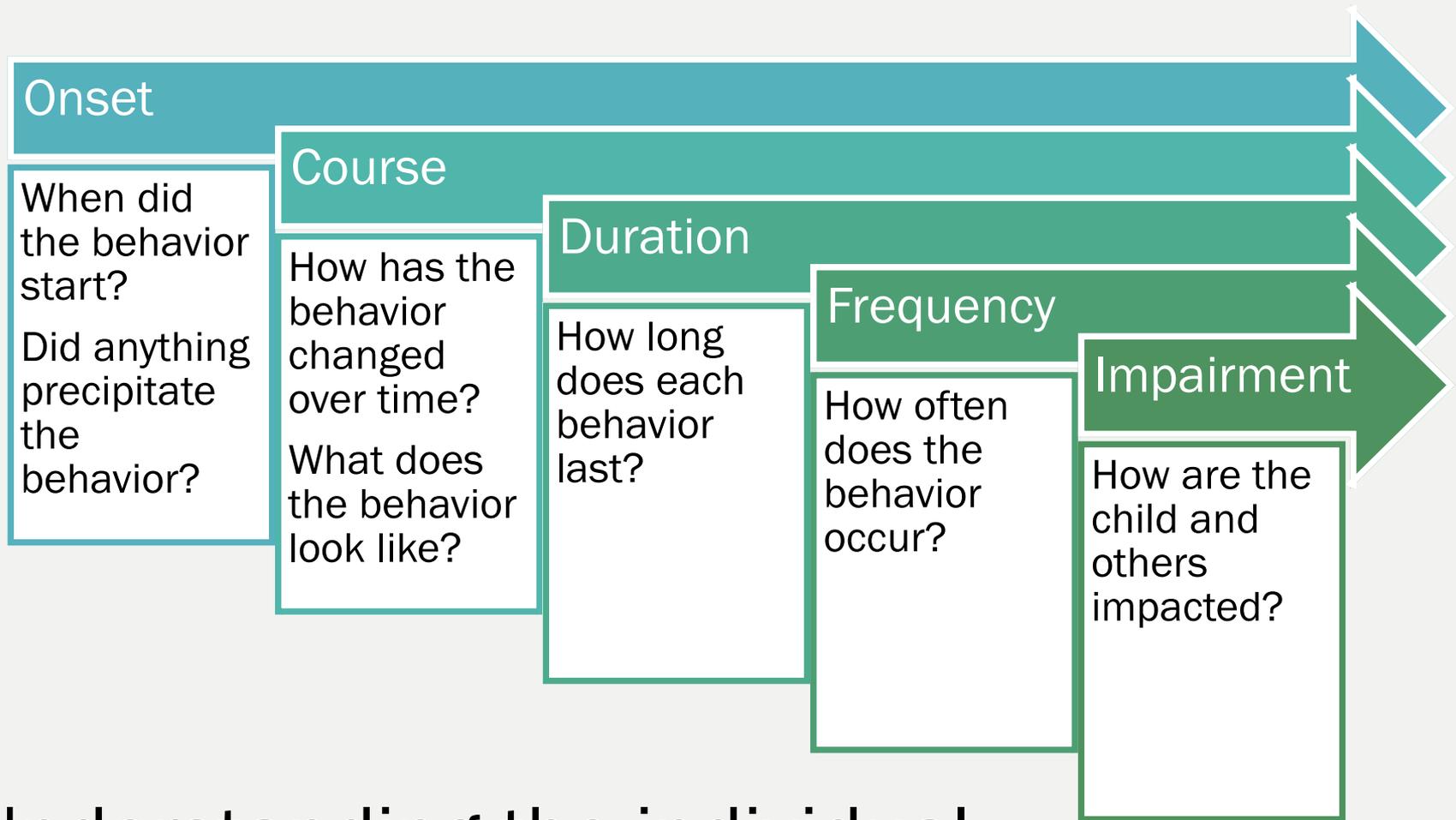
First stop—caregiver buy-in

- How has parenting been affected by traumatic events
- Engagement of caregivers to commit to reducing trauma symptoms by providing safety, structure, and consistency to increase positive behavior while reducing negative behavior.

Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA)

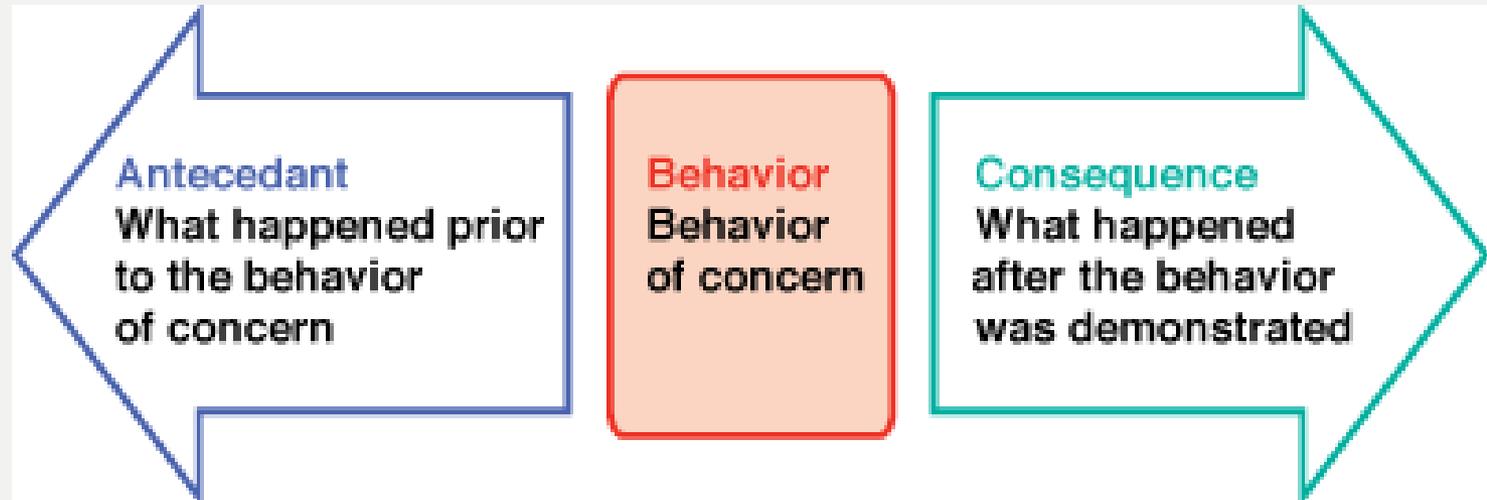
- Allows behavior to be defined, understood, and put in context
- Sets the stage for building a plan to change behavior on all fronts, not just on the response after a behavior occurs
- Helps caregivers understand their role in changing behavior

Key Questions to Ask in an FBA

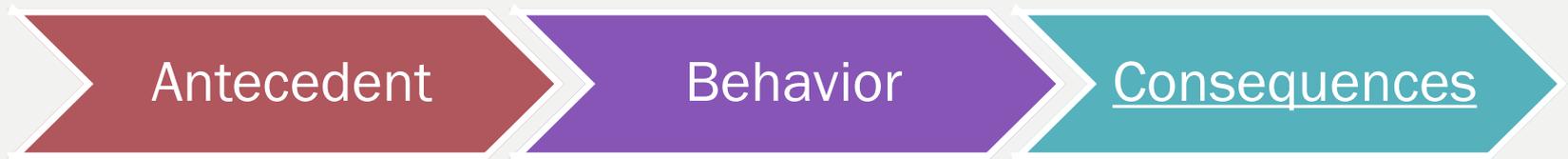


Understanding the individual

Pieces of an FBA



Why may the behavior keep occurring?



- Attention (Positive or Negative)
 - *I made someone laugh; it's the only time my caregiver focuses on me*
- Escape / Avoidance
 - *When I escalate, people leave me alone. I don't have to do my chores or go to school*
 - *Is it a skills deficit or a performance deficit?*
- Gain Access to Items
 - *When I act out, sometimes they give in and I get what I want*
- Self-Reinforcing
 - *This feels good; I had fun doing it*

Why does this matter?
How to select a method?

Parenting a teen: What to adapt?

- Not as much as you'd think!
- Consistency, predictability, structure
- Importance of relationships
- Positive praise/reinforcement in combination with punishment/consequences
- Involve teens in decision making
- Grant increasing independence

The Importance of Relationships

- Positive Time & Attention
- Praise
- Privileges & Rewards

Effective Boss

Ineffective Boss

The Importance of Relationships

- Anyone know PCIT?
- Same principles can be applied

Special time:

3-4 days a week for 15 minutes

Activity that is enjoyable that the teen chooses or join them in an already engaged activity.

What about the strategies?

■ Remember these?

	Mon	Tue	Wed.	Thurs	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Make bed before school							
Get dressed before 8:00 am							
Keep hands to yourself							

- Consider using similar principles with adaptations for development appropriateness
 - Point system with points assigned to expectations and privileges
- Privileges tied to completion of chores/expectations
 - If/then...
- Gives room for autonomy and control while caregiver maintains boundaries and expectations

What about the strategies?

- Response to misbehavior or noncompliance
 - *Removal of privileges*
 - *Grounding*

- For minor misbehavior (teen does not follow through with chore)
 - Points are withheld
 - Privileges are not allowed per the agreement established

- For serious misbehavior
 - Consider grounding

How have you heard caregivers use grounding?

- Quick, angered response with no attention to schedule
- No follow through
- Piling on the grounding
- No monitoring system in place

What should grounding really mean?

- Think time-out, but aged up
- Removal from all privileges and positive reinforcement
- Short-term
 - *If always grounded, what does teen have to fight for?*
- Predictable
- Consistent

Case Examples

- 13 year old male – low self-worth, high anxiety
 - *Will not do any of identified chores*
 - *Mother largely against positive reinforcement system*

- What would you do?
 - *Interventions for behavior?*
 - *Interventions with mother?*

Case Examples

- 16 year old female – emotionally withdrawn, anger outbursts
 - *Argumentative with caregiver*
 - *Has zero privileges because of “poor attitude”*

- What would you do?
 - *Interventions for behavior?*
 - *Interventions with caregiver?*

Case Examples

- 15 year old female – history of substance use, highly avoidant, defiant
 - *Caregiver reports her to be unmotivated by caregiver praise*
 - *Very few expectations in the home*
- What would you do?
 - *Interventions for behavior?*
 - *Interventions with caregiver?*

Reading Recommendations

- Your Defiant Teen (2nd Ed):10 Steps to Resolve Conflict and Rebuild Your Relationship
 - *By Barkley and Robin*
- How to Talk So Teens Will Listen & Listen So Teens Will Talk
 - *By Faber & Mazlish*

THANK YOU!

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