



BASIC TIPS PACKAGE

FOR MEDIATORS/CAREGIVERS

Centre for Behaviour Health Sciences
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Behavioural Services

Eligibility:

To be eligible, children and adults must have a developmental disability with a significant cognitive delay who exhibit challenging behaviour that is interfering with their ability to participate in daily living activities. Service is available to individuals living within York Region and Simcoe County.

Program Description:

In this program, service delivery is matched to need and may be provided through individual and/or group support. Following a behaviour assessment, a behaviour support plan is created that includes prevention, skill building, and intervention strategies. Specific skills are taught using the mediator model, which involves working directly with the caregivers by teaching them how to implement behaviour interventions that will support the individual they are caring for.

Referral Process:

For more information or to make a referral:

Adults

All referrals are made by contacting Developmental Services Ontario (DSO) 1-855-277-2121.

Children

- York Region residents please contact (905)-773-2362 or 1-888-557-5550.
- Simcoe County residents please contact (705)-728-9143 or 1-888-577-6955.

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What is Applied Behaviour Analysis – “ABA”?

- A science that focuses on understanding behaviour. Behaviour is anything that we can see or hear. Behaviour is as simple as an eye blink or as complicated as a sequence of steps, such as brushing teeth.

Non-behavioural Description	Examples of Behaviour
“She’s anxious”	Crying, pacing, biting nails
“He’s hungry”	Eating food
“He’s angry”	Yelling, clenching fist
“She’s happy”	Smiling, laughing
“He’s lazy”	Sitting on the couch

- Behaviour does not need to be negative. For example, talking is a behaviour.
- ABA focuses on how a person’s environment and their behaviour are related.
- Behaviour analysts create programs to reduce difficult behaviours and increase skills. Data collection is used to measure changes in behaviour and determine if the programs are successful.
- Behaviour analysts focus on teaching new skills to replace challenging behaviours in order to improve quality of life for all individuals.
- All behaviour has meaning to a person, it serves a functional purpose. This means that we engage in behaviour to assist in gaining something we want, or to escape from something we do not want. There are four functions of all behaviour: attention, tangible, escape, and sensory. These are explained in detail in the Functions of Behaviour Chart on page 7

Setting the Individual up for Success

Strategies →	Rule out the Medical	Consider Environmental Changes	Increase Effective Communication	Avoiding and Reducing Triggers
Description	Medical conditions such as migraines, toothaches, stomach pain, medication side-effects, puberty, constipation, allergies, sleep deprivation, and/or infections can contribute to an increase in challenging behaviour.	Transitioning to a new school or home, seasonal changes, a death in the family, caregiver or support staff change, or a new living environment are all examples of environmental changes that can cause challenging behaviour.	Some individuals may have a difficult time or are completely unable to communicate their wants and needs which can cause challenging behaviour to occur. Imagine you wanted a drink of water or a snack that someone else was holding but had not learned an appropriate way to let someone know.	Triggers are anything that can cause the behaviour to occur. For example: demands, being denied access to preferred items/activities, being told “no”, or being told to wait, wanting attention when a caregiver is talking to someone else, or wanting to work with a preferred support staff, etc.
Tips	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Take the individual to a physician, dentist, and/or psychiatrist regularly to rule out any medical conditions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Reduce demands ➤ Keep a structured routine ➤ Provide verbal praise for appropriate behaviours ➤ Seek out additional support from a behavioural agency, a case manager, a counsellor, and/or social worker if needed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Offer choices between two options (e.g., use actual items such as snacks, toys, activities, etc.) ➤ Use pictures - the individual may be able to point to what he or she wants ➤ Use simple and direct language ➤ Seek assistance from a Speech and Language Pathologist if you require additional support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Set up the environment so that common triggers for the individual are kept to a minimum ➤ Practice coping and preventative strategies when triggers are unavoidable. For example; practice taking breaks, replacement activities, reinforcement for task completion, warnings that a transition is coming, a visual schedule, a timer to count down and signal to the person how long he or she has to wait for something or when something is going to end.

Function	What the individual may be communicating through behaviour	Mediator/Caregiver Response
Attention	LOOK AT ME HELP ME I'M BORED I'M EXCITED I'M HAPPY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Avoid providing attention immediately after the individual engages in challenging behaviour, because the individual is learning that the way to get your attention is to act out. You will see the challenging behavior continue to increase <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Avoid eye contact, telling the person to stop, talking about the challenging behaviour. ➤ Give positive attention (praise, pats on the back, High-5s, etc.) when the individual is behaving well. ➤ Teach the individual: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ To say “Hi”, “Look at me”, “Excuse me”, or “play with me” ○ High five or fist pump, wave, etc.
Tangible	I WANT _____ TAKE ME TO _____ GIVE ME BACK MY _____ I'M HUNGRY/THIRSTY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Avoid giving the individual access to preferred objects, food, and/or activities immediately after the individual engages in challenging behaviour. The individual is learning to act out to get things he or she wants. You will see the challenging behavior continue to increase. ➤ Tell the individual <u>when</u> he/she can have access to their favourite items/activities (e.g., create a schedule for the individual's day) ➤ Teach the individual: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ To request (e.g., “I want _____”) using words or pictures
Escape	NO! STOP! THIS IS HARD! TAKE IT AWAY! LEAVE ME ALONE! I NEED A BREAK!	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ If you asked the individual to do something before they engaged in challenging behaviour and then he or she engaged in challenging behavior, avoid giving them a break or removing the demand immediately after the challenging behaviour. The individual is learning to act out when he or she doesn't want to do something he or she has been asked to do. You will see the challenging behavior continue to increase. ➤ Teach the individual: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ To request for help, a different/easier task, or a break ○ To use relaxation techniques
Sensory	I'M IN PAIN I'M AFRAID/SAD/LONELY THIS FEELS GOOD THIS HELPS ME COPE THIS HURTS LESS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Be aware of the individual's health concerns and/or consult a medical professional ➤ Include time for the individual to engage in preferred activities in the daily schedule ➤ Consult an Occupational Therapist for activities or items that may meet the individual's sensory needs/wants to avoid giving the individual access to these activities after challenging behavior. The individual is learning to act out to get access to these activities. You will see the challenging behavior continue to increase. ➤ Teach the individual: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ To request (e.g., “I want _____”) using words or pictures ○ To request for a break ○ To take medication (if needed) ○ To tell you if he or she is in pain (e.g., pointing to areas of the body, saying “I feel sick” using words or a picture, etc.)

Antecedent-Behaviour-Consequence (ABC) Model

Behaviour analysts use an Antecedent-Behaviour-Consequence (ABC) model to understand what happened before and after a behaviour occurred. This will help you to determine why the behaviour occurred and what is causing the behaviour to continue occurring.

SETTING EVENT	ANTECEDENT	BEHAVIOUR	CONSEQUENCE
<p>“Slow trigger” Something within the last 24 hours that may set the stage for the behaviour to occur</p>	<p>“Trigger” What happened right before the behaviour started?</p>	<p>What we SEE What we HEAR What did the behaviour look like?</p>	<p>Your Response Outcome Result Environment change What happened after?</p>
<p>Sick, Hungry, Sleep deprived, In pain, Change of support staff, Change in routine, Wearing an itchy piece of clothing, No activity to keep busy with, No attention from others, etc.</p>	<p>Example: Child sees chocolates in the grocery store, child asks for or picks up some chocolate, and the parent tells him no or to put it down</p> 	<p>Child begins to cry and scream</p> 	<p>Parent buys the child the chocolate</p>  <p><i>The child learns that if parent says no and he cries and screams, he will get chocolate. The behaviour will increase.</i></p>

How to Enrich the Environment

Once you understand why the behaviour is occurring, you can enhance the individual's environment to minimize triggers. Sometimes an individual may act out if they do not have meaningful activities to keep them engaged. It is important to help the individual choose activities that will improve their quality of life.

Things to consider for an enriched environment:

- How much free time does an individual have?
- Does the individual have sensitivities? (e.g., noises, smells, temperature, space, etc.)
- What are the opportunities for social interaction?
- What are the routines?
- Are there opportunities for the individual to be independent?
- Does the environment provide opportunity for learning and positive development?

Strategies for Enriching the Environment

1. Provide transition warnings and detailed explanations of upcoming activities
2. Use First/Then language
3. Offer choices
4. Provide the individual with activities throughout the day
5. Be aware of the individual's sensitivities to the environment (e.g., textures, clothing, bright lights, smells, sounds, etc.)
6. Use visuals or written schedules
7. Use simple language
8. Simplify tasks
9. Offer attention for good behaviour regularly

Some Examples of How to Enrich the Environment

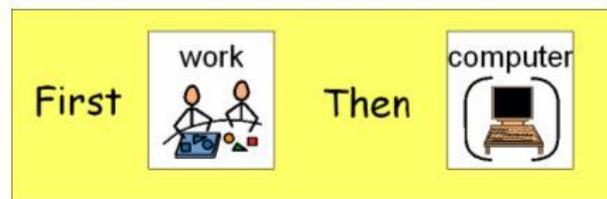
When an individual is in a noisy room:

- Provide the person a choice to move to a quiet area
- Offer breaks
- Wear noise-cancelling headphones and/or earplugs
- Listen to music



When giving the individual an instruction or placing a demand:

- Use first/then language when you want the individual to do something he or she does not want to do (i.e., First non-preferred task/then preferred task). We can motivate the individual to complete a task if they know that they get to do something fun (i.e., preferred) after. Once the individual has completed the demand, give the reward (or preferred activity) right away.
 - For example, if Johnny wants to play on the computer but you want him to finish his homework, you can say “First finish work, then you can play on the computer.” Remember to keep your promise and give the reward right away.



- If there are multiple tasks that an individual has to complete, give a choice of which task to do first
- Break the task down into smaller steps
- Use a motivating item as a reward for completing the task
- Remind the individual that they can ask for a break if needed

When asking the individual to wait:

- Use first/then language to ask the individual to wait for a preferred item or activity. Example, “First wait for 5 minutes, then I can take you to the dollar store.”
- Waiting might be a hard concept for some people to understand, so you can keep the person occupied by giving a task or preferred activity (e.g., crafts, watching T.V., etc.) to fill time while they wait.
- Use a physical timer to show the person how long they have to wait for.



The 10 Rules of Reinforcement

Reinforcement occurs when the consequences (what happens after the behaviour or caregiver response) of a behaviour are so rewarding for the individual that they make the behaviour more likely to happen again in the future.

1. The difference between reinforcement and bribery is that reinforcement comes after a task is completed; a bribe is offered and provided before the task. Bribes benefit yourself, while reinforcement benefits the person.
2. Reinforcement should be delivered immediately after the good behaviour. The major danger of delay is that the wrong behaviour may be accidentally reinforced.
3. Reinforcers should be meaningful to the individual. What is reinforcing to one person may not be reinforcing to another. Make sure that the individual is reinforced in a way that they prefer!
4. Meaningful reinforcers can change. An individual may find something reinforcing at one time but may not later.
5. A variety of reinforcers should be used. If an individual is always reinforced in the same way the reinforcer will lose its value.
6. Some people are reinforced by social reinforcers such as praise and attention (example: “excellent job cleaning up your toys, Erin!” or “Thank you for being so patient at the doctor’s office today Erin, now we can go mini putting together”), while others are reinforced by tangible items such as toys or food.
7. It is important to pair tangible reinforcers with social reinforcers (example: when Erin has shown good behaviour, provide her with her favourite snack and positive praise at the same time).
8. Always focus on the good behaviour and be sure that the individual knows that you have noticed and recognize their efforts.
9. Reinforcement is not always providing a reward, sometimes reinforcement can mean removing something that the individual does not like, for example turning down loud music when an individual asks.
10. You are commenting on behaviour, not on the individual. Example, “I really like how you waited patiently” instead of “good boy.”

Alternative Ways of Saying “No”

Using the word “no” can sometimes act as a trigger for challenging behaviour. Here are some strategies for effectively communicating that an individual’s request may not be met in the moment.

Strategies	Example
Give information	<p>Child wants to wear his red shirt but it is in the washer.</p> <p><i>Caregiver:</i> “I know you want to wear your red shirt, but it is in the washer. You can choose a blue or green shirt.”</p>
Accept and Acknowledge Feelings	<p>Child does not want to leave the zoo.</p> <p><i>Caregiver:</i> “I know the zoo is so much fun, and you don’t want to leave. Let’s set a timer for 15 minutes and when the timer goes off, we will leave.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A visual timer is helpful when asking someone to transition to a less preferred activity
Describe the Problem	<p><i>Child:</i> “Can we go for a car ride?”</p> <p><i>Caregiver:</i> “Sure we can, but the car is being fixed. We can go in the afternoon when the car is back.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Show when the individual can go on a car ride using a visual schedule
When Possible, Substitute a “Yes” for a “No”	<p><i>Child:</i> “Can we go to the playground?”</p> <p><i>Caregiver:</i> “Yes, first lunch, then playground.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Simplify the language to match the individuals’ level of comprehension

'Fast 5' Take-Away Points

1. It is important to rule out medical conditions, consider environmental changes, increase effective communication, and reduce triggers (Page 5).
2. Identify the function(s) of the challenging behaviour and change or adjust your response to reduce challenging behaviours (Page 6).
3. Consider ways that you can change the individual's environment for the better (Page 8)
4. Provide praise and reinforcement to the individual when he or she is behaving how you would like. Remember the 10 rules of reinforcement (Page 10).
5. Everyone must be consistent in responding to the challenging behaviour!

Change will not be easy, but these tips will
make what may feel impossible, possible!