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Addressing Behavioral Difficulties

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Session *Objectives*

- To Highlight why behaviors occur in general
- To discuss examples of behavioral difficulties
- To discuss some ways of addressing behavioral difficulties

Once upon a *time*.....

- People with Autism were hidden and not to be seen
- We did not understand what autism of developmentals disabilities were or how to deal with them
- Their behaviors were difficult for us to manage

But now.....

Why *Behavioral Difficulties* Occur? – Pre-behavior intervention

- Medical/biological considerations

- Diagnosis – e.g. Autism, Pica, FASD

- Medication – e.g. Risperidone

- Hormonal changes – e.g. puberty

- Physical structure – e.g. small space

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Why Behavioral Difficulties Occur – *Functions*

- Behaviors occur because the individual has been reinforced in the past by engaging in such behavior.

- There are generally 4 conditions that maintain the occurrence of behavior. These conditions are called 'behavior functions'.

- A behavior may be maintained by just one function or a combination of more than one function.

Behavioral *Functions*

Behavior function includes the following:

- ○ Attention

- ○ Escape

- ○ Tangible

- ○ Sensory Stimulation/Automatic Reinforcement

Behavior *Functions*
Contd.

- Attention: Some behaviors occur because the individual needs/wants attention.

- Examples: Ngozi is watching TV alone and is bored. She induces herself to vomit and her parents and siblings come to attend to her.

Behavior *Functions*
Contd.

Escape

What is escape: the immediate response contingent removal of an aversive condition resulting in an increased frequency of that behavior

- Example:

Greg is asked to take the dishes to the kitchen and he hits himself in the face. Mom then asks his brother to take the dishes. Next time, Greg will do the same.

Behavior *Functions* Contd.

Tangible – Access to desired items.

Examples

- Chichi asks to watch Sesame street, mum says no, Chichi throws a tantrum and mum turns on her favourite show

- Donald steals a toy and enjoys access to the stolen toy

- Joshua starts to scream at the Ikeja Mall because mum said no chocolate for you then mum gives him a chocolate bar to keep him quiet

Behavior *Functions* Contd.

Sensory Stimulation or ***automatic reinforcement*** *-The person enjoys and derives reinforcement from engaging in the behavior*

Examples:

- Sexual behaviors

- Rocking

Using the ABC Model to inform function

- Antecedent: What happened immediately before the behavior problem
- Behavior: The specific behavior that you consider a problem
- Consequence – What happened immediately after the behavior
- Create a form and have it completed for each behavior problem

Antecedent	Behavior	Consequence	Possible Function
Mom is in Bola's room with her, her phone rings and she picks up	Bola bites herself and is crying	Mom hangs up the phone and Bola stops biting herself	Attention
Bola is watching TV then Mom calls him to come and eat	Bola starts crying and hits herself in the head	Mom tells Bola it is okay; you don't have to come now and Bola stops crying	Escape. She escapes going to eat
TV show is done	Bola starts crying and rolling on the floor	Mom goes to him asks what is wrong, what do you want? And then brings food. Bola stops crying	Tangible

Assessment Tool: Questions About *Behavior Function* (QABF)

QABF
Questions About Behavioral Function
Timothy R.. Vollmer & Johnny L. Matson

Student Name: Behavior of Concern:

Date Completed: Informant's Name:

Rate each question on the following scale. Scoring on second page.

X	0	1	2	3
Does not apply	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often

____ 1. Engages in the behavior to get attention.

____ 2. Engages in the behavior to escape work or learning situations.

____ 3. Engages in the behavior as a form of "self-stimulation".

____ 4. Engages in the behavior because he/she is in pain.

____ 5. Engages in the behavior to get access to items such as preferred toys, food or beverages.

Questions About *Behavior Function* (QABF)

___ 6. Engages in the behavior because he/she likes to be reprimanded.

___ 7. Engages in the behavior when asked to do something (brush teeth, work, etc.)

___ 8. Engages in the behavior even if he/she thinks no one is in the room.

___ 9. Engages in the behavior more frequently when he/she is ill.

___ 10. Engages in the behavior when you take something away from him/her.

___ 11. Engages in the behavior to draw attention to him/herself.

___ 12. Engages in the behavior when he/she does not want to do something.

___ 13. Engages in the behavior because there is nothing else to do.

___ 14. Engages in the behavior when there is something bothering her/him physically.

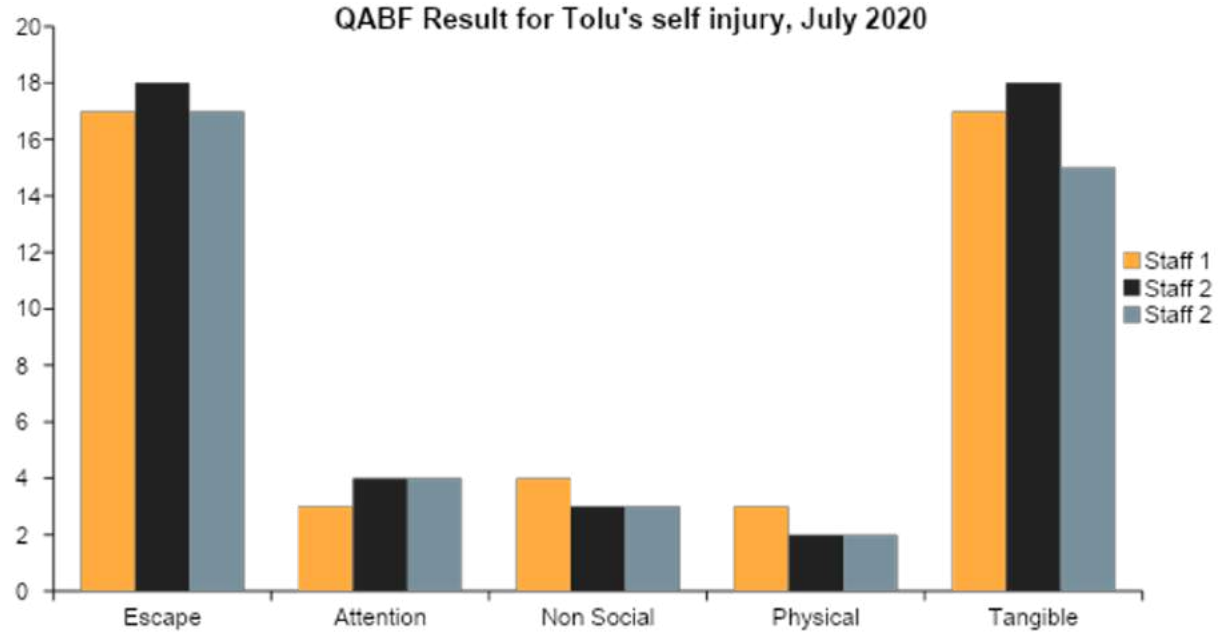___ 15. Engages in the behavior when you have something he/she wants.

Questions About *Behavior Function* (QABF)

___ 16. Engages in the behavior to try to get a reaction from you.

___ 17. Engages in the behavior to try to get people to leave him/her alone.

___ 18. Engages in the behavior in a highly repetitive manner, ignoring this/her surroundings.

___ 19. Engages in the behavior because she/he is physically uncomfortable.

___ 20. Engages in the behavior when a peer has something he/she wants.

___ 21. Does he/she seem to be saying "come see me" or "look at me" when engaging in the behavior?

___ 22. Does he/she seem to be saying "leave me alone" when engaging in the behavior?

___ 23. Does he/she seem to enjoy the behavior, even if no one is around?

___ 24. Does the behavior seem to indicate to you that he/she is not feeling well?

___ 25. Does he/she seem to be saying "give me that (toy, item, food)" when engaging in the behavior?

Graph 1

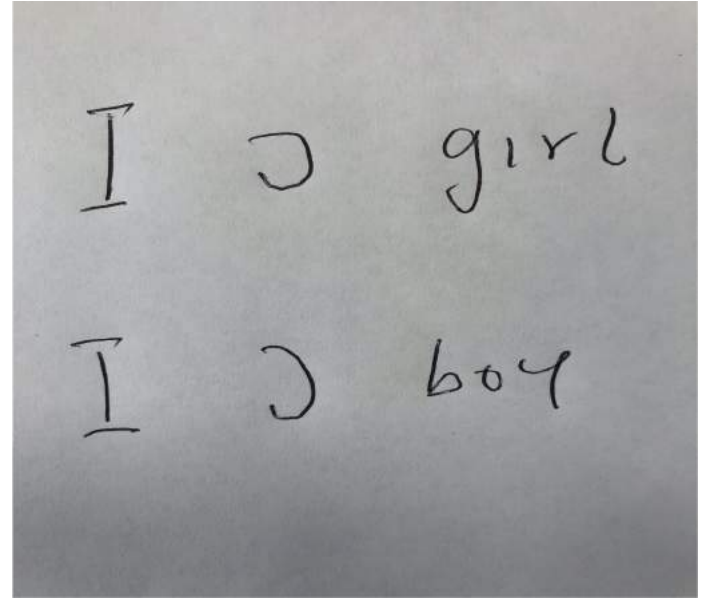Questions About Behavior Function (QABF) *Summary*

QABF Result for Tolu's self injury, July 2020

Staff 1
Staff 2
Staff 2

Escape   Attention   Non Social   Physical   Tangible

Skill Deficit: Print by a *student* with *dyslexia*

- I am a girl
- I am a boy

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Examples of other *Behavioral* Difficulties

- Impaired Communication
- Public masturbation
- Self injury
- Aggression towards others
- Property damage
- No fear or Excessive fear
- Feeding difficulties
- Bedwetting
- Stereotypic behaviors
- Running away, the list goes on

How Do We Address These *Behavioral Difficulties*?

- Antecedent strategies
  - Teach communication
  - Pair positively with the individual
  - Conduct Reinforcer assessment – restrict access to items identified
  - Use visual schedules
  - Give the heads-up for transitions
  - Don't ask for too much
  - Set rules and enforce them
  - Reduce boredom
  - Premack
  - Caregiver match, peers, noise
  - Identify precursor behaviors
  - Task analysis and Chaining

How Do We Address These *Behavioral Difficulties*?

- Consequent Strategies

  - Verbal praise

  - Physical feedback – High 5

  - Social/Silly reinforcers

  - Token economy

  - Contingency contracts

  - Differential reinforcement

How Do We Address These *Behavioral Difficulties*?

- Consequent strategies

  - Time out

  - Extinction

  - Penalties

  - Social stories

Questions?

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Thank *you*

Reference

- Johny L. Matson & Ashvind Singh, 2005. Questions About Behavior Functions. Disability consultants LLC.

- *Timothy R.. Vollmer & Johnny L. Matson. Questions About Behavioral Function (QABF).*