



## **Problem Behavior: How we analyze and decrease problem behavior**

### **Functional Behavior Assessment:**

The first step in developing a valid behavioral treatment program is to determine **why** the problem behavior occurs. This assessment has two components: a functional assessment interview, in which the Behavior Analyst will ask you specific questions about the problem behavior, and direct observations will be conducted to observe the behavior as it occurs in the environment. This analysis is vital in determining which strategies to implement in order to effectively decrease the problem behavior. In the field of Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA), there are no “cookie cutter” programs. All programs are individualized based the environment, and what is triggering and maintaining the problem behavior. When analyzing behavior, we look at the A-B-C’s (Antecedent-Behavior-Consequence). Behavior is a product of the events that come just before it (A=antecedent) and just after it (C=consequence). Consequences determine how likely the behavior will be emitted in the future. Behaviors will increase if they are followed by positive consequences, and decrease if the correct consequences are implemented.

There are many different functions to problem behavior, so it would be considered “unethical” to provide someone with the appropriate consequence strategy if the function of the behavior is not yet determined. The following are types of functions (i.e., reasons why) people engage in problem behavior: attention,

escape, access to tangibles, automatic (it feels good to them). Also, some learner's engage in problem behavior for multiple reasons (e.g., both attention and escape).

### **Behavior Reduction Training:**

Once an assessment is completed, and the BCBA has confirmed assessment results regarding the function of the behavior, a formal program will be written. The BCBA will develop behavior reduction protocols (sometimes referred to as "BIP" which stands for Behavior Intervention Plan). The plan will have specific strategies on how to decrease the problem behavior, which include "antecedent manipulations"- things we can do in the environment to prevent problem behavior from occurring as well as "consequence strategies"- things we do when the behavior occurs. Also, the plan will have a section on how we will teach appropriate replacement behavior so that the individual can be reinforced for appropriate behavior. Caregivers will receive training on how to collect data and implement the protocols. Precise training is conducted to ensure accuracy and consistency. The BCBA will analyze data to determine the effectiveness of the intervention and it will guide them in making appropriate treatment changes if necessary.

### **Timing:**

It is recommended to implement an ABA behavior reduction program as soon as problem behavior develops. The longer a problem behavior exists, the longer it will take to reduce. For example, if a child has been hitting for the past 5 years, and the problem behavior has been inadvertently reinforced by attention from others, it will take longer to reduce than a child who has only been hitting for 1 month. Timing is everything, so make sure to contact a BCBA so that the proper intervention can be implemented immediately.

# Crisis Behavior Plan

**Reasoning:** This plan guides staff actions related to a behavioral crisis on the part of a person supported that poses an imminent risk of harm to self or others.

**Definition of a Crisis Behavior:** Behavior (continual physical aggression, continual self-injury, and/or continual high magnitude disruption) on the part of a person supported that poses an imminent risk of harm to self or others and requires staff actions to maintain safety of other persons supported and/or staff. Non-compliance, crying, screaming verbal aggression or any other non-threatening problem behavior **DO NOT** constitute crisis behavior.

*How to react to Crisis Behaviors?*

1. Ensure child safety by removing objects that can be used as projectiles from within reach.
2. Call out for assistance from BCBA (if available) or other ABA clinician to assist in moving child to safety.
3. Block self-injury and/or aggression while withholding all preferred items.
4. Upon de-escalation of crisis behavior use non-reactive response. Depending on history of learner, either maintain stability until caregiver arrives or redirect learner to a neutral activity in which they have been successful completing in the past.
5. In the case a child experiences crisis behaviors over multiple sessions please consult with your lead supervisor/Board Certified Behavior Analyst on staff.

**Definition of Elopement:** if a child abruptly runs away.

*How to react to Elopement Behaviors?*

1. Immediately go after child
2. Call out **CODE 4** to tell others nearby to block the running path and shut the lobby door to ensure safety.
3. In a non-reactive manner, take child by the hand and walk them back to the area in which he/she was supposed to be.

\*Staff will **NOT** use manual restraints (i.e. physically holding a person)

**Dealing with Serious Injuries:**

If a child, caretaker, or Achieve Beyond employee is seriously injured or harmed, medical personnel will be notified and an incident report will be filled out.