FCT
FUNCTIONAL COMMUNICATION TRAINING

REDUCE SELF-INJURY & AGGRESSION
PROMOTE SATISFACTION, INDEPENDENCE

PRESENTED BY

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THE SET-UP

You have a new client. A limited prior history has been provided.

Your new client displays problem behaviors such as aggression, self-injury, and property destruction.

You are responsible for a living environment providing safety, learning opportunities, and habilitation.

You want to make life pleasant for your client and staff and for yourself.

You must respond to dangerous situations even before you have an approved Behavior Support Plan.

YOUR BASIC TOOLS

CRISIS RESPONSE

- Capability to respond appropriately to crisis situations:

  Crisis Intervention and Manual Restraint training

  Certified program

  Certified trainer

  Staff training, evaluation, feedback/coaching

  Team practice and evaluation, including crisis intervention practice

YOUR BASIC TOOLS

FUNCTIONAL BEHAVIOR ASSESSMENT

- Assess reasons for person's problem behaviors
- 1. want attention, don't want attention (social)
- 2. want activities or things (food, iPad, listening to music)
  3. escape or avoid (going to bed, cleaning up after lunch, arithmetic homework, people too close, crowds, demands too frequent)
  4. "intrinsic reinforcement" (don't know why/how the undesirable behavior is maintained)

YOUR BASIC TOOLS
DISCOVER REINFORCERS -- POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE.

- 1. What does the person want? What are they willing to work for? What they are willing to work for could make a good positive reinforcer.
- 2. What does the person want to avoid or escape? Providing the ability to avoid or escape something unwanted could be a good negative reinforcer.

YOUR BASIC TOOLS

COLLECT AND USE DATA

- Collect behavior, training, and other data

  Base treatment and program decisions on the data

  1. Sleep
  2. food intake
  3. medical (seizures, blood sugar levels, gait/fall info, weather tolerance)
  4. compulsive behaviors
  5. environmental stressors (crowds, noise, lights)
  6. training results data
  7. frequency of target behaviors
  8. A-B-C data, scatterplot graphs

YOUR BASIC TOOLS
TEACH & PROMOTE APPROPRIATE BEHAVIOR

- Variety of different methods, including ….
- Functional Communication

WHAT IS FUNCTIONAL COMMUNICATION TRAINING?

- Functional Communication Training consists of:

Rewarding appropriate methods of communicating wants, needs, and concerns to another.

The communication can be verbal or nonverbal.

- (adapted from CARD, the Center for Autism and Related Disorders)

FUNCTIONAL COMMUNICATION TRAINING

- If people have no other way to communicate they will use maladaptive behaviors like tantrums, screaming, biting, hitting, kicking—all of these are undesirable but when they work to get what's needed, are they maladaptive?

- They're not efficient, but if they don't have a choice they will go to that because they have no other ways of getting their needs met.

THIS DESCRIPTION IS ADAPTED FROM AN ARTICLE BY **GREG HANLEY (2012)** IN *BEHAVIOR ANALYSIS IN PRACTICE, 5(1)*, 54-72:

- Imagine that you experience some temporary muscle paralysis so that you can't talk, write, or control your muscle movements. You are hospitalized and on several medications. They have the effect of drying out your eyes, nose, skin, and mouth. Water is on the table, but you can't get to it.
- If you bang the bed rails with the back of your hands long enough and loud enough people will come to you and do things for you, like turning the television on or off, or fluffing your pillows, or give you things, one of which is water that you desperately need.
- Because it gets people to come to you, you keep banging until the backs of your hands are bruised and your care providers are annoyed.

INABILITY TO COMMUNICATE → FRUSTRATION AND ANXIETY INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIORS

- The behavior consultant shows up and recommends restraining you when you bang and giving you access to music and some Skittles when you are not banging.
- Your problem behavior occurs less frequently. It doesn't go away, but your bruises are healing, and the staff is less annoyed with you.
- Job well done by the behavior modifier? I doubt you think so.

- You need a plan to teach a better way to let you know what someone wants!

TEACH NEW WAYS TO COMMUNICATE USING WORDS, SIGNS, PICTURES

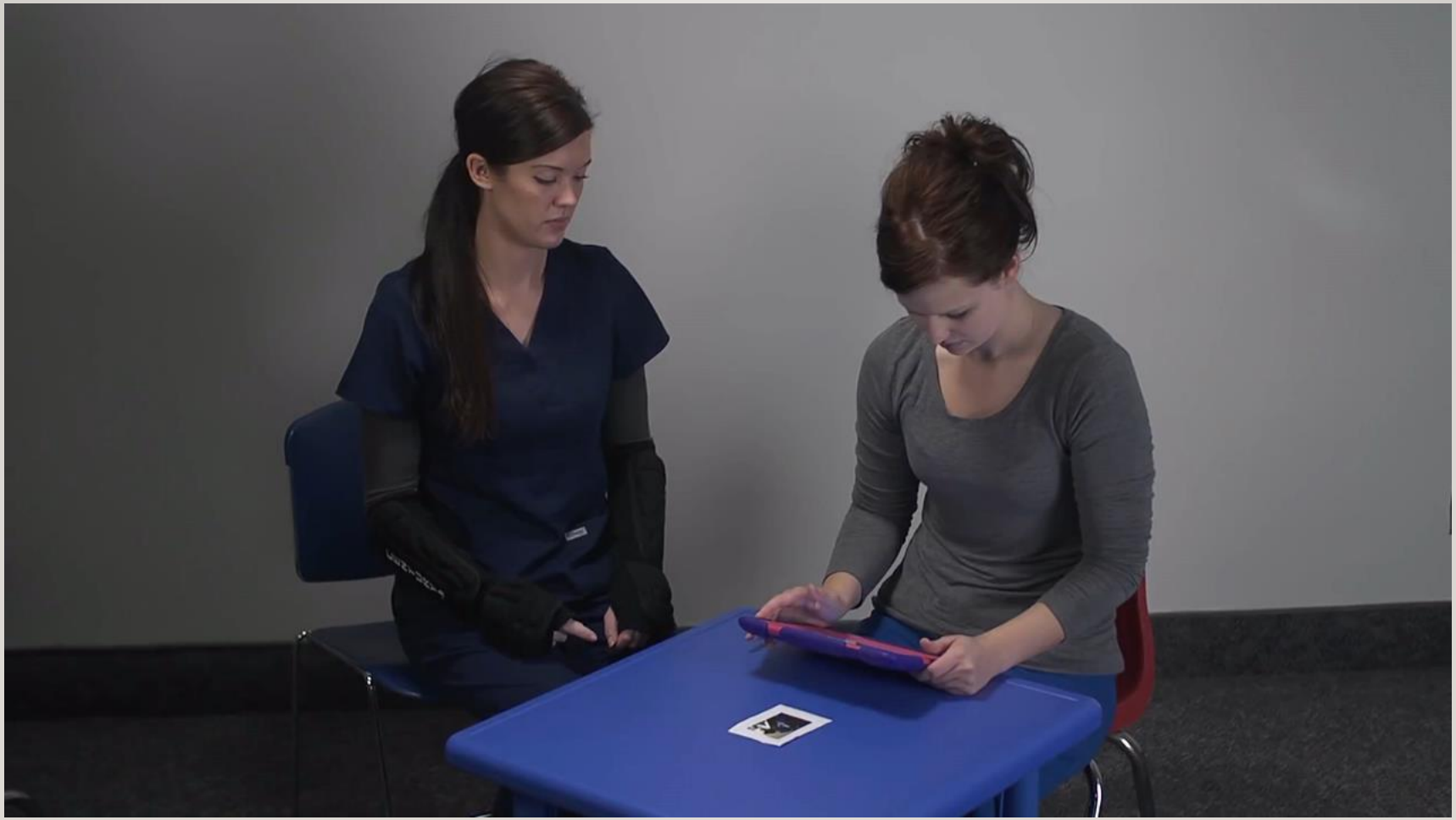
- 1. Words not necessary, but desirable for obvious reasons
  2. Sign or gesture vs picture selection and display
     - Picture selection is a separate and sometimes difficult task
  3. Important to consider the ability of people in the setting who will need to respond to the communication—will they understand and respond appropriately?

TEACH BY

- 1. Demonstrating (modeling), prompting
- 2. Rewarding desired behavior
- 3. Ignoring undesired behavior

Demonstration of teaching a functional communication response by reinforcing the desired behavior and ignoring the undesired behavior (extinction).

from a presentation by Dr. Wayne Fisher on YouTube (2015).

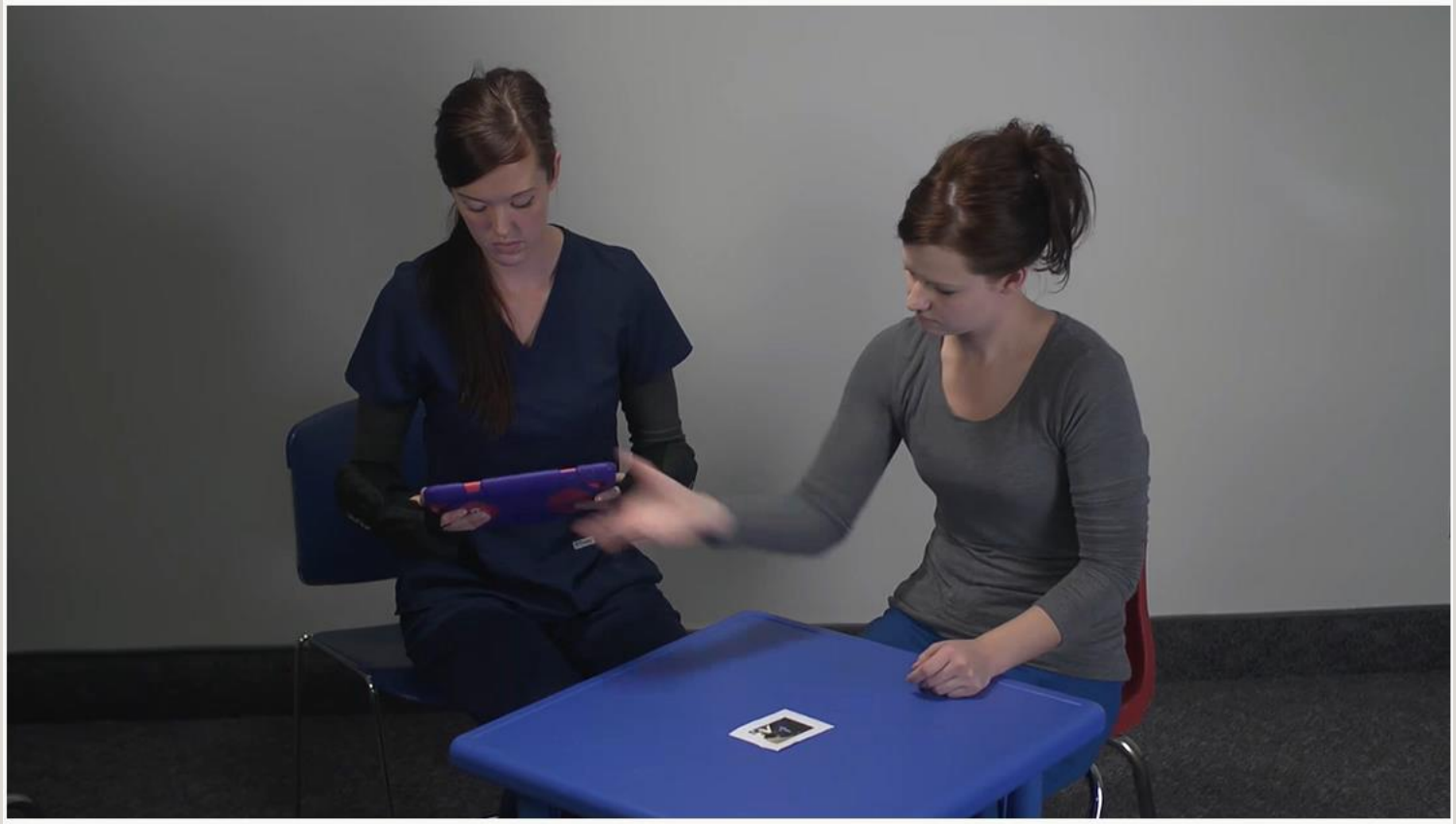


TO BEGIN

- Prompt desired behavior
- Ignore responses that are unwanted
- Immediately reward wanted response
- Fade out prompts (in this example, increase the time before prompting)

LATER

- Signal that a request can be successfully made
  (example: remove the request card when activity is not available)
- Slow down presentation of requested items or activities
- Reduce the number of times reward is presented within an activity period



POTENTIAL PROBLEMS

1. Communication skills should be demonstrated with different people and in different places.
2. The Functional Communication Response (FCR) may be lost if the reward for communicating appropriately is too little or too late.
3. Lack of staff attention or responding leads to return of behavior that previously gained attention.

SUMMARY
BASIC TOOLS FOR THE HABILITATION OF YOUR CLIENT

- 1. Capability to respond appropriately to crisis situations
- 2. a Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA)
- 3. Positive and negative reinforcer identification
- 4. An observation-based Behavior Support Plan
- 5. Relevant data collection and program modification based on data
- 6. Encouraging and teaching appropriate behavior

SUMMARY
FUNCTIONAL COMMUNICATION TRAINING

"Rewarding appropriate methods of communicating wants, needs, and concerns"

Center for Autism and Related Disorders,
YouTube presentation

SUMMARY
FUNCTIONAL COMMUNICATION TRAINING

1. If people have no other way to communicate or if their communications are ignored, they will use maladaptive behaviors that are not efficient, but they work
2. Easier, more efficient methods have a good chance of replacing harder, inefficient methods, but only if staff and others respond to the new communication style

SUMMARY
FUNCTIONAL COMMUNICATION TRAINING

3. There are advantages and disadvantages to using words, signs, or pictures for communicating —

   signs are not understood by many,
   pictures require choosing from a set,

   words cannot be physically handled

SUMMARY
FUNCTIONAL COMMUNICATION TRAINING

4. Teach Functional Communication by:
   - Modeling
   - Prompting
   - Signalling reward availability
   - Rewarding desired behavior
   - Ignoring undesired behavior

SUMMARY
FUNCTIONAL COMMUNICATION TRAINING

5. After a Functional Communication Response (FCR) is learned,
   - Fade out prompts
   - Thin the reinforcement to a workable level
   - Teach tolerance for delay in obtaining what was requested
6. Teach generalization of the response—Communication skills should be demonstrated with different people in different places

LEARNING . . . .

Pick someone within your treatment responsibility and develop a plan to teach them to replace a simple undesired behavior or "bad habit" with a simple communication of what they want.

…. AND DOING

- Start with an educated guess about the function of the behavior and pick
  - A simple response they can use to communicate (FCR)
  - An appropriate reward for using the FCR instead of the undesired behavior
- With your BCBA, design a simple training routine and teach your client to make a request.

"TAP MY SHOULDER" IF YOU WANT MY ATTENTION

- For someone who displays a target behavior for attention:
  - 1. "Tap my shoulder if you want my attention." (Model and prompt as needed.)
  - 2. Ignore all inappropriate requests for attention except for a tap on your shoulder.
  - 3. When your shoulder is tapped, give the reward of attention to reinforce the behavior of tapping you on the shoulder.
  - 4. Repeat.

QUESTIONS?

The Resources listed below (except the book) are provided as clickable links at the end of the presentation Outline that accompanied your invitation to attend.

Take this opportunity to scan the list while mulling over any questions you may have.

RESOURCES
(ALSO PROVIDED AS CLICKABLE FILE WITH INVITATION TO WEBINAR)

1. **Center for Autism and Related Disorders**
   (Headquartered in California, with local offices in New Orleans, etc.) YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P2C0EvFRM_k

Eight minute segment on Functional Communication Training.

RESOURCES

2. **Dr. Wayne Fisher. *Functional Communication Training (clinical applications).***

- YouTube:https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_DGI4h_Dcyg
- see demonstrations of reinforcing appropriate communication:
- https://youtu.be/_DGI4h_Dcyg?t=1873 (minute 33:10)
- and signaling that reinforcement is available:
- https://youtu.be/_DGI4h_Dcyg?t=3086 (minute 51:30)

RESOURCES

3. **Gregory P. Hanley**. (2012). Functional assessment of problem behavior: Dispelling myths, overcoming implementation obstacles, and developing new lore. *Behavior Analysis in Practice, 5(1)*, 54-72.
(See page 55 for quoted section.)

- https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3546636/pdf/i1998-1929-5-1-54.pdf

RESOURCES

4. **Tiger, JH, Hanley, G, and Bruzek, J.** (2008). Functional communication training: A review and practical guide. *Behavior Analysis in Practice, 1(1),* 16-23.
   - https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2846575/pdf/i1998-1929-1-1-16.pdf

5. **James Clear**. (2018). ***Atomic Habits***. NY: Avery.

QUESTIONS?

Please use the Chat function to ask your question.