



Defining Behaviors of Concern: Serious vs Junk

Developmental Disabilities Division

Meghann Kernan, M.Ed., BCBA, LBA

DEFINE BEHAVIOR

BEHAVIOR

Behavior is observable and measurable.
It is *anything* a person does.

Behavior is communication!

TOPOGRAPHY

How the behavior looks.

Ex: Aggression – broad and vague



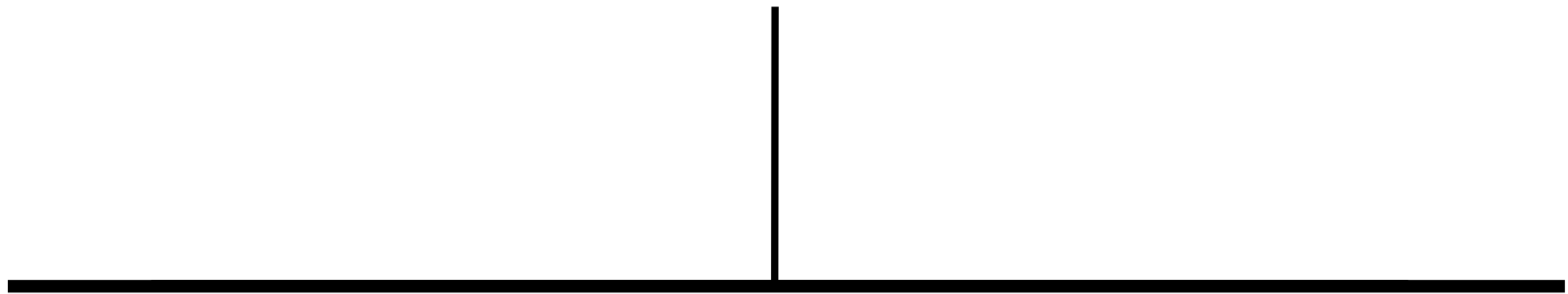
Specific definition: “any instance of hitting, kicking, or biting another person or object.”



IS IT A BEHAVIOR?

YES!
BEHAVIOR!

NOPE



SINGING

Not hitting

Talking

Running

Receiving
Rewards

Losing Weight

Spitting

Being excited

Jumping in a
Puddle

Getting Wet
From the Rain

Being Anxious

Rocking back
and forth

Eating a
cheeseburger

Being Hungry



Behavior Support Planning

- **REMEMBER!** Behavior Support Plans should be planned to help change the environment to support an individual.
 - It outlines **HOW** others will change how they respond
- Focus on target behaviors that are dangerous, limited the access to the community or other environments, or limit a person's ability to build relationships with others



OBSERVABLE AND MEASURABLE

Target behavior: Anna is not prepared for work.

Replacement behavior: Anna will be prepared for work.

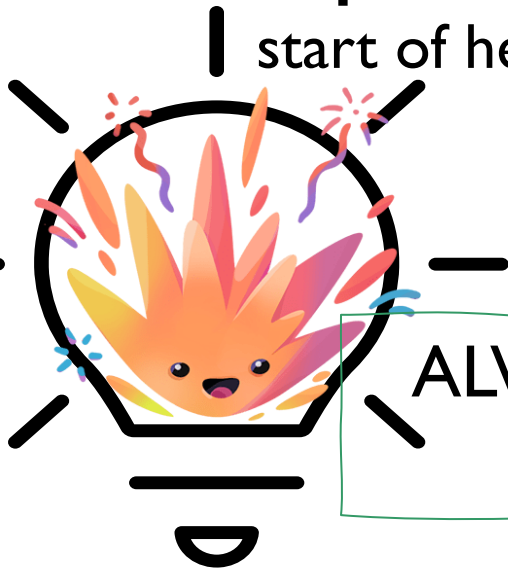
NOT VERY CLEAR

Target behavior: Anna does not have her name badge and apron at the start of her shift.

Replacement behavior: Anna will have her name badge and apron at the start of her shift.

OBSERVABLE AND MEASURABLE CRITERIA!

ALWAYS focus on the behaviors you want to increase. Pay more attention to positive behaviors!



Desirable Alternative Behavior

- What should the individual be doing at that time?
- What are others doing?
- How should they respond to situations?



Behavior Name	Topography	Desirable Alternative
Off Task	Plays with objects on desk, spins in chair, looks out window	Looks at speaker, follows along with group, returns to task after no more than 30 seconds from looking away
Poor organization and planning	Rushes to complete work tasks; waits until the end of the period to begin tasks	Uses checklist to complete tasks, uses timer, sends self reminders
Disruptive / Outbursts	Throws materials, screams at peers, slams objects on desk	Turns in break pass, asks for space, lets other's know they are feeling frustrated

Dive deeper if you are using these words as your target behavior

- Hyperactive
- Oppositional
- Lazy
- Uncaring
- Unappreciated
- Disturbed
- Under socialized
- Emotionally unavailable
- Forgetful
- Impulsive
- Spiteful
- Aggressive
- Angry
- Anxious
- Agitated

JUNK VERSUS SERIOUS BEHAVIOR

Junk Behavior



- Annoying
- Non-harmful
- We all do some type of junk behavior

Serious Behavior



- Dangerous / potentially dangerous to self
- Dangerous / potentially dangerous to property
- Dangerous / potentially dangerous to others



What is junk behavior?

- In general – inappropriate behavior that is not harmful or illegal
- It can occur alone or with other more serious behaviors
 - May be precursor that behavior is going to escalate

Why do people engage in Junk behavior?

- Gain attention
- Escape or avoid a task or situation
- Gain access to an object or activity
- Gain comfort
- Get a reaction
- Get you to go away
- To get you to do something for them

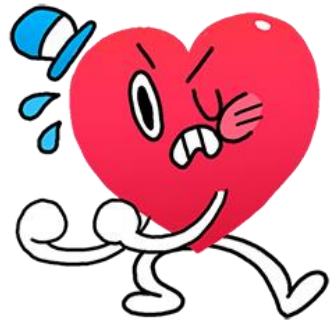


LET'S PRACTICE



Cursing under breath

JUNK!!!



Attempting to fight housemate

SERIOUS



Yelling or being loud

JUNK!!!



LET'S PRACTICE



History of verbal threats leading to property destruction

SERIOUS



Staring at staff

JUNK!!!



Self-Injurious Behavior

SERIOUS

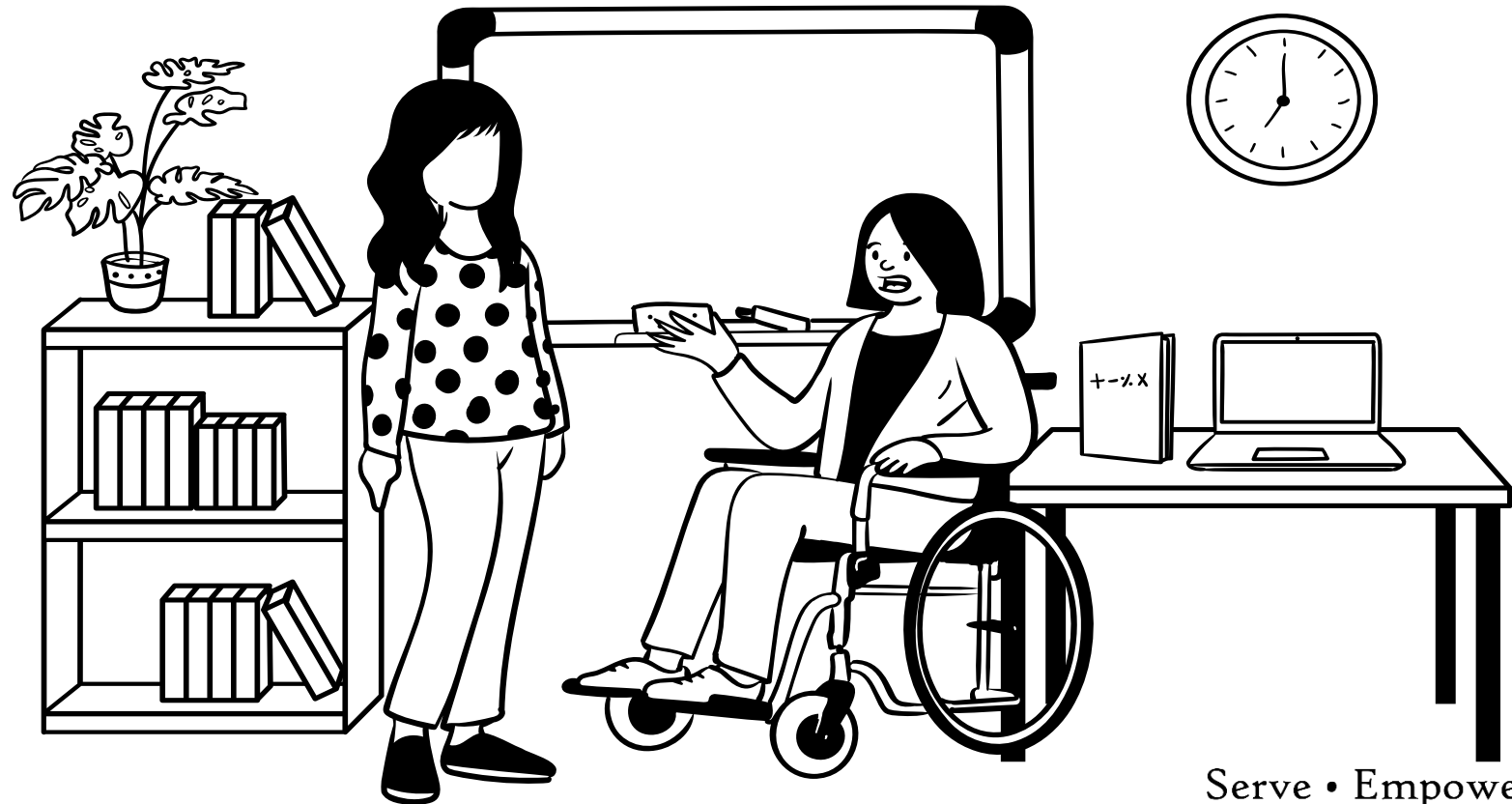


JUNK VERSUS SERIOUS BEHAVIOR

- Junk Behavior
 - Annoying
 - Non-harmful
 - We all do some type of junk behavior
- Serious Behavior
 - Dangerous / potentially dangerous to self
 - Dangerous / potentially dangerous to property
 - Dangerous / potentially dangerous to others

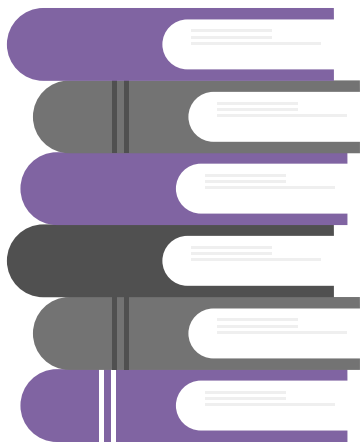
DEFINING SERIOUS BEHAVIOR

- Select a target behavior (s)
- Define the target behavior (s)
- Identify if the behavior occurs not enough / too much



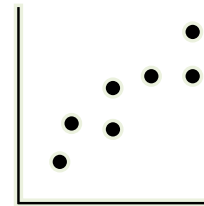
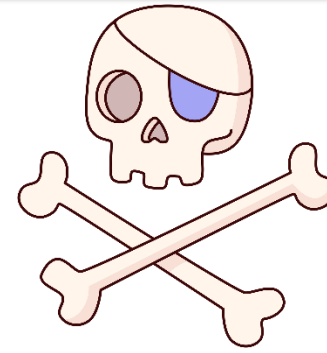
SELECTING A TARGET BEHAVIOR – SOCIAL SIGNIFICANCE

- Increase access or independence
- Important
- Age appropriate
- Adaptive replacement
- Lead to another skill



SELECTING A TARGET BEHAVIOR – PRIORITIZE BEHAVIORS

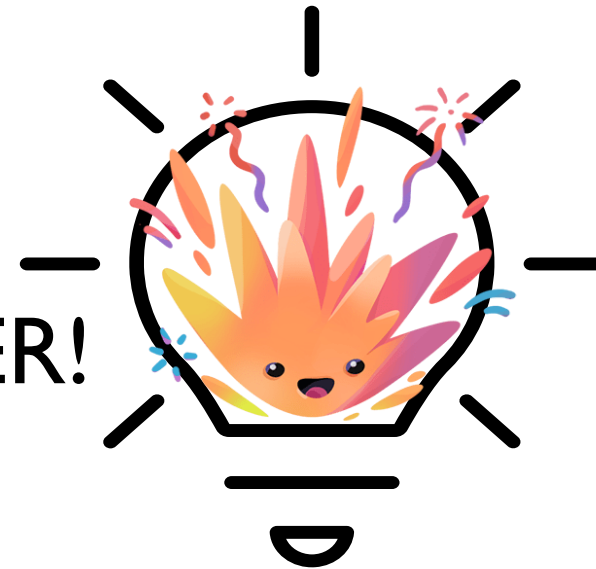
- Danger
- Frequency
- Learning History
- Importance
- Reinforcement



BEHAVIOR HIERARCHY

- Remember to target the **most socially significant behaviors** first.
- This may mean you have to let some other minor, inappropriate, annoying, or even maladaptive behavior go for a while.

YOU CAN WORK ON IT LATER!



TO TARGET OR NOT TO TARGET

Aggression to others (hitting, slapping, or throwing objects) at least weekly	Yes
Wearing the same shoes everyday	No
Refusing to bathe or shower at 6:00 AM	No
Biting arm to the point of breaking the skin when asked to complete chores	Yes
Cursing under their breath when told it's time to go to work	No
Headbanging when transitioning to community outings	Yes
Making racial slurs and direct threats while invading personal space	Yes

SAMPLE GOALS

COMPONENTS NEEDED:

1. Is the behavior increasing or decreasing?
2. How is the increase being measured (frequency? Opportunity? Independence?)
3. How do we know if the goal has been met? (time component)
4. Who is collecting the data?



SAMPLE GOALS:

“Sam will decrease yelling at housemates to less than 2 instances during a 10-minute session for three consecutive days of staff collected data”

“Daisy will increase her independence with 3 self-help skills (tooth-brushing, toileting and bathing) across two consecutive days of staff collected data”

“Frank will increase his ability to appropriately label his emotions during non-preferred social interactions at 80% of opportunities across 3 consecutive days of data collection of staff data”

REACTING TO JUNK BEHAVIOR

PIVOT AND PRAISE

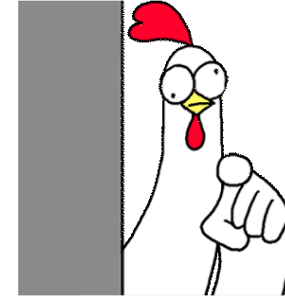
- Don't say anything or react to the behavior
- Give your attention to someone else, something else, or other desirable behavior
- When the behavior has stopped or improved, provide praise acknowledging the good behavior

INSTEAD OF
REACTING,
REMEMBER

Pivot and Praise



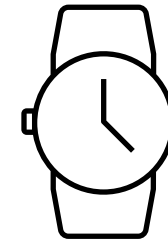
Focus on the Good



Remain calm



Be consistent





Resources

[Behavioral Services Procedural Guidelines](#)

Cipani, E., 2011. Functional Behavioral Assessment, Diagnosis, and Treatment. Springer Publishing Company

<https://theautismhelper.com/>

<https://bcotb.com/how-to-manage-junk-behavior/>

<https://patch.com/florida/westchase/pivot-from-that-annoying-behavior>

www.pbis.org



<http://www.mh.alabama.gov>



Alabama Department of Mental Health



ALMentalHealth



ALMentalHealth

The ADMH Mission:

Serve • Empower • Support

The ADMH Vision:

Promoting the health and well-being of
Alabamians with mental illness,
developmental disabilities and substance
use disorders



Thank you!

bye

