

Setting the Stage for Success: Effective Behavioral Strategies for Students with Smith Magenis Syndrome

Barbara Haas-Givler, MEd, BCBA

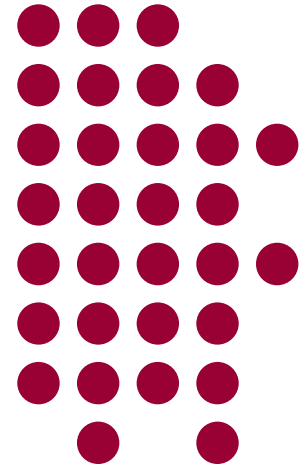
Behavior Specialist

Genetic Services at Elwyn

www.elwyngenetics.org

PRISMS 6th International Educational Conference

September 18, 2009



ABA

-
- **APPLIED**-interventions used with individuals in their natural settings and target behaviors significant for the person's social and day to day living
 - **BEHAVIORAL** – interventions are based on behavioral principles
 - **ANALYSIS**-therapeutic decisions are based on on-going data collection

ABA

ABA is NOT- just for special education

BEHAVIOR MODIFICATION AND
BEHAVIORAL INTERVENTIONS— have
been around for a long time – weight loss
programs, smoking cessation, incentives and
bonus plans.

Behavior



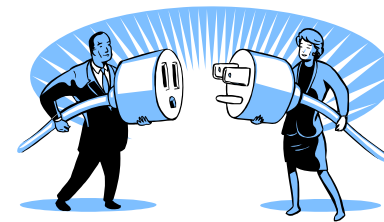
BEHAVIOR IS NOT
ALL BAD

Behaviors

-
- Raise a hand
 - Read words
 - Answer a question
 - Ask for assistance
 - Follow directions
 - Complete work
 - Help another person
 - Drop to the ground
 - Pull out fingernail
 - Cry or yell
 - Bang head on ground
 - Destroy materials
 - Refuse to do a task
 - Repeat a question

The Connection Behavior and Learning

- Content too hard or too easy?
- Does the learner know how to learn?
- Environmental changes that are necessary for student success?
- Is the student motivated and reinforced?
- Effective teaching strategies and behavior management techniques?



Behavior

Behavior is:

- **CAUSED** (*antecedents/triggers*)
- **OBSERVABLE** (*recordable*)
- **COMMUNICATION**
- **SERVES A FUNCTION** (*why*)

Challenging or Problem Behavior

- Function is not usually the problem
- Same behavior may have several functions
- Interferes with learning new skills
- Socially isolates the learner

“What happened?”

- Out of blue
- Nothing
- Upset



Functions of Behavior

Gain -Object, activity or attention	Escape -Object, activity or attention
Gain –Sensory	Escape -Sensory

Functional Behavior Assessment – FBA Outcomes



Identify and Define

- Challenging or inappropriate behavior
- Function of the behavior(s)
- Strategies to prevent or antecedent strategies
- Strategies for alternative/replacement behaviors
- Consequences that will not maintain inappropriate behaviors
- Input for IEP
 - Specially designed instruction (SDI)
- Input for Behavior Plans

On-Going Process

Not a Functional Analysis/Structural Analysis

A-B-C's of Behavior

Antecedents – and Setting events

- What happened immediately before the behavior(s)?
- What triggered the behavior (s)?
 - Person, place, activity, sound, smell, demand/request
- Slow triggers
- Quick triggers
- Establishing/motivating operations EO/MO
 - hunger, thirst, pain, fatigue

A-B-c's of Behavior

Behavior or the response

- Observable, recordable
- Collect data - make decisions

A-B-C's of Behavior

C

onsequences

- What happened after the behavior
- Includes corrective feedback
 - “No” “Wrong” “It isn’t...” “you can do better”

Consequences



- Consequences are not all bad!!!
- Consequences occur after the behavior

Consequent strategies Reinforcement

Attention (depends on the
student- highly individual)

Stickers

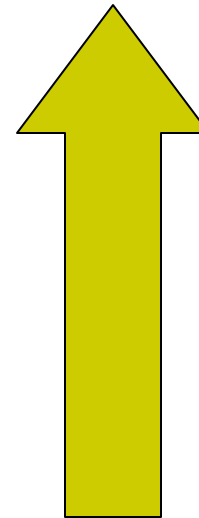
Token economy

Rewards

Extra computer time

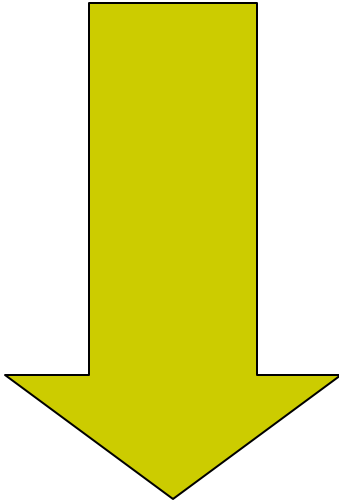
Escape

Avoidance



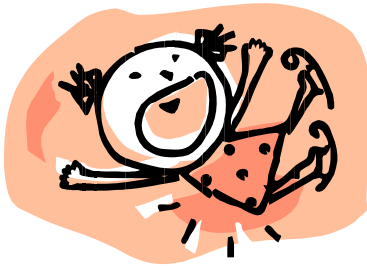
Consequent Strategies

Punishment



- Simple correction
- Overcorrection
- Restitution
- Spanking (not recommended)
- Time out
- Response Cost

Reinforcement



Reinforcers



Reinforcers

- Less you have the more valuable it is
- Loss is greater when you have less to lose



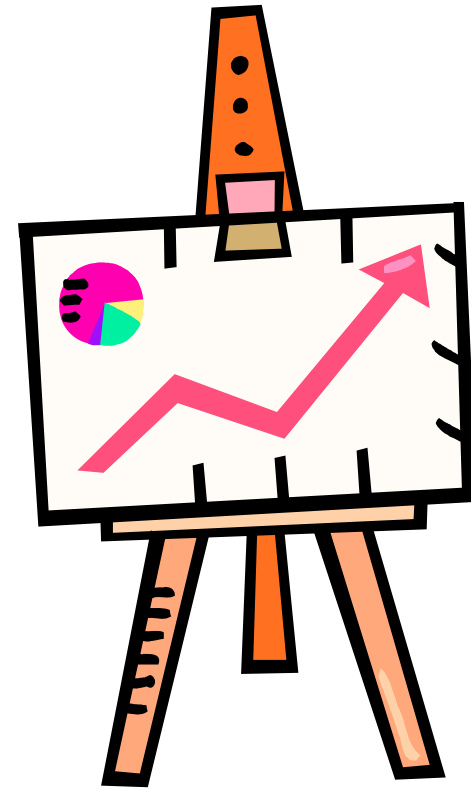
Consequent Strategies Disadvantages

- REACTIVE
- Behavior-
 - occurred and practiced
- Individual has not learned a replacement
- *Behavior interferes with all learning*

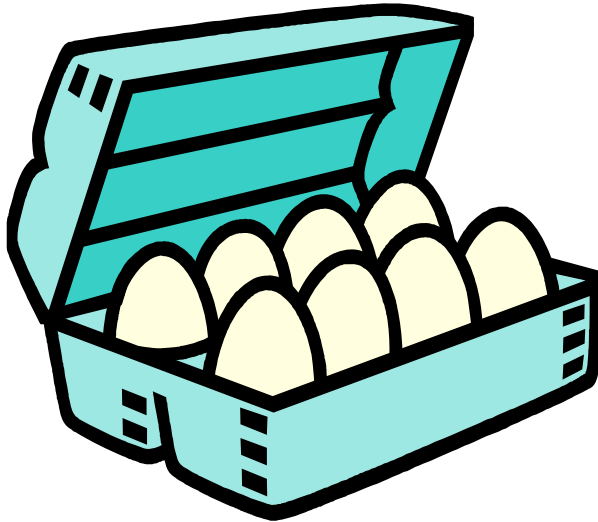


Consequent Strategies Advantages

- Increase, shape or maintain behaviors
- Group or individual
- Familiar



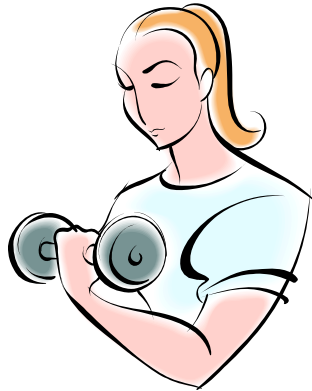
Antecedent Strategies Disadvantages



- Initially more time consuming
- Not as readily understood by others
- May need to “sell” these strategies – not just “walking on eggshells”

Antecedent Strategies

Advantages



- Consider behavioral and learning styles of students with Smith Magenis syndrome
- Parent/staff control the opportunities
- Less disruptive
- Acquire skills
- Interrupt behavior chains
- **DO NOT HAVE TO DEAL WITH THE BEHAVIOR**

Students with SMS

Positive characteristics

- Engaging, endearing, and full of personality!
- Appreciative of attention
- Eager to please
- Sense of humor
- Communicative

Students with SMS

Positive characteristics

- Responsive to structure and routine
- Motivated by a variety of reinforcers, activities
- Causes of aggression, outbursts often identifiable
- Tantrums, aggression can often be redirected if caught early

Students with SMS

Challenging behaviors

- Attention-seeking:
Crave one-to-one interactions with adults
- Often in competition with peers or siblings for staff or parent attention
- Perseveration - repeatedly asking the same question

Students with SMS

Challenging behaviors

- Poor impulse control
- Aggressive hugging of others
- Prolonged tantrums, outbursts
- Difficulty adjusting to changes in routine
- Poor sense of time - can't be rushed!

Students with SMS

Characteristics that can go either way

Adult-orientation

- student may monopolize staff's / parent's attention; may show little interest in peers

Affectionate

- can lead to aggressive (rib-crushing!) and indiscriminate hugging of others

Remorseful

- student may prolong remorsefulness to gain attention

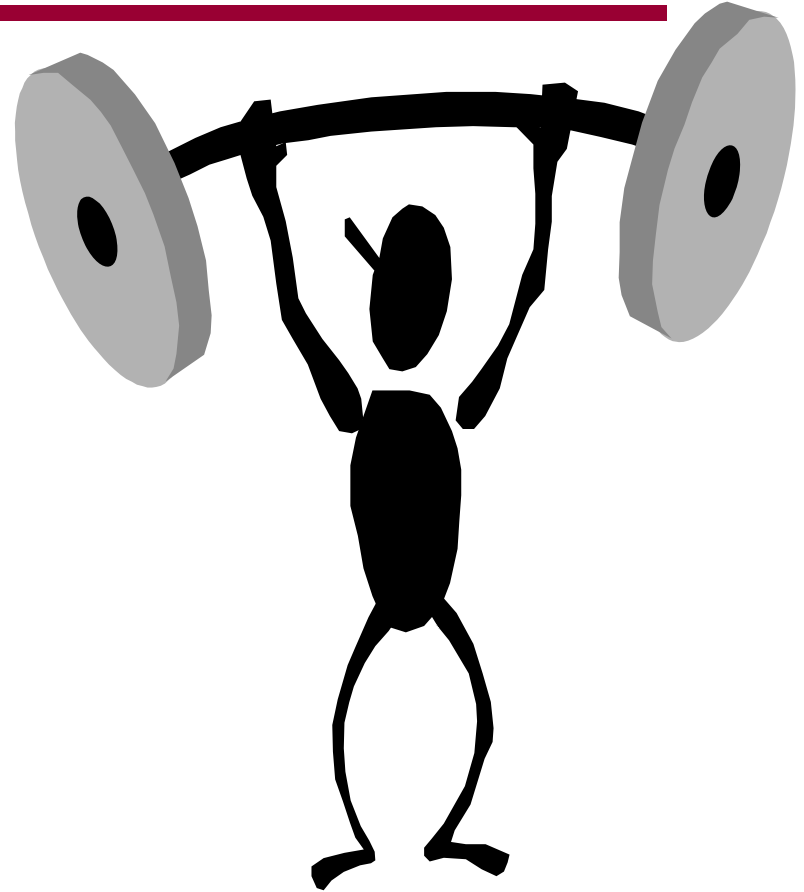
Visual learners

- student may become distracted by visual stimuli; visual impairment is common

Antecedents vs. Consequences

Students with SMS often want
stickers, tokens or rewards
BUT

*Antecedents and setting
events are powerful*



Classroom Strategies

- Close student: staff ratio
- Classroom atmosphere, structure, and curriculum
- Many planned (not spontaneous) activities as in preschool / primary grades
- Natural breaks in schedule
- Good communication among staff
- Staff training / consistency of approach
- Communication between home and school

Student / Staff Match

Staff need to:

- be emotionally neutral
- avoid power struggles
- be comfortable with close proximity
- be versatile but not volatile
- be creative
- think on their feet
- have a good sense of humor!

Classroom Strategies Which Are Often Successful

- Individualized schedule
- Individualized or adapted classroom management system
- Visual supports and reminders
- Planned breaks and opportunities to request breaks
- Variety of positive reinforcers
- Preferential seating
- Redirection and distraction
- Transition warnings
- Handshakes, not hugs
- Humor

Classroom Strategies Which Are Often Unsuccessful

- Time-out in classroom when student is already engaged in a behavioral outburst
- Teacher or aide getting visibly upset or raising voice
- Ignoring the student rather than distracting, redirecting, or engaging
- Counseling, coaxing, touching the student during an outburst
- Physical restraint during an outburst, except when necessary to avoid injury to self or others



Successful strategies

Antecedent

Target (increase)

- Transition from preferred to non preferred activity
- Moving within the building or down the hallways

Strategies

- Visual Schedule (actual items, pictures, photos along with printed words)
- Preferred items or fidget toys as distractors (individual basis)
- Create *jobs* or structure activities that move the child in hallways
- Pre-specified reinforcers
- “You will have COMPUTER will be after ...”

Successful strategies

Antecedent

Target (decrease)

Decrease property destruction

Decrease verbal or physical assaults

Decrease grabbing or playing with property of others

Strategies

- Story or video of appropriate play with materials and friends
www.thegraycenter.org
- Interrupt behavioral chain-neutral manner
 - distract, redirect BEFORE escalation
- Preferred staff/proximity
 - during demanding tasks
 - in challenging settings
- Establish own “office area” in classroom

Successful strategies

Antecedent

Target (increase)

- Task completion
- Compliance
 - Following requests
 - Following directions

Strategies

- “Which one do you want to do **first**?”
- “You **will** play on the computer after you”
- Visual schedules/Timers
- 80% easy/20% hard tasks
- High Probability
 - “Give me 5, show me... pick up your pencil”
- Adult Attention
 - Proximity
 - Collaboration
 - Preferred adult places demands
- Attention for on task

The ABCs OF Behavior

ANTECEDENTS

What happened before?

BEHAVIOR

What happened?

CONSEQUENCE

What happened afterwards?



Traditional Emphasis



Emphasis Needed

for Students with SMS

Remember

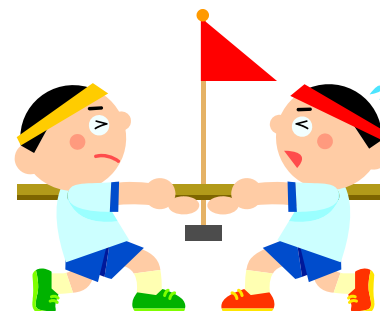
-
- Behavior change is not just about the student



Set the Stage for Success

-
- Attention is Attention – Catch students being good!
 - Distraction and redirection are effective tools
 - Motivating activities and adult attention/support often prevent behavioral outbursts
 - Schedules and visual supports are useful
 - Whenever possible offer choices (limit to two)
 - Avoid power struggles
 - It's not always what you say but how you say it
 - Don't underestimate the value of calm
 - Control what you can
 - An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure

Duos not Duels



- Antecedents and Consequences
- Research and Practice
- Consistency and Communication
- Resources and Staff