

# Behaviour 1: Functions of Behaviour Script

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## **M4T0: Introduction to Module (Short)**

Hi, welcome to this module, Behaviour 1, and thank you for supporting Spectrum Teaching. In this first part of our two-part module on behaviour, we will be covering functions of behaviour. To best support our children with behavioural challenges, we need to understand why behaviours occur, and how they are learned. By doing so, we can have more accurate observations of behaviour, better data collection, and better ways to support children with ASD to succeed.

In this set of videos, we will look at what is behaviour, operational definitions, the ABC framework, functions of behaviour, reinforcement, and some antecedent and consequence targeted strategies. This module is designed to give you a conceptual understanding of behaviour and some strategies to try out in the classroom. If you ever feel uncomfortable implementing the strategies we discuss, please contact a behavioural specialist to assist you. When working with more complex or safety-related behaviours, you should seek the help of these professionals to guide any interventions for your children.

As with all content here at Spectrum Teaching, please remember to exercise our guiding principles of understanding the individual, empathy, and patience when working with children on the autism spectrum. This is especially true for behaviour, and therapists have repeatedly mentioned that being able to understand the perspective of the child is one of the most powerful things we can do in supporting our students.

In Behaviour 2, we will take a closer look at data collection, focusing on ways to practically gather information to support behavioural interventions.

Thank you for watching, and I hope you enjoy the module. In the next video, we will begin by discussing, “what is behaviour?”

## **M4T1: What is Behaviour?**

Hi, to begin this module on functions of behaviour, it is important for us to first clarify what behaviour is. It is very common for us to only focus on behaviours that are considered challenging or problematic, however, behaviour encompasses much more than that. In fact, behaviour is any action that can be seen or heard. Essentially anything that we do that can be observed by another person is considered to be a behaviour.

If we look at everyday behaviours, smiling is a behaviour, so is talking, and tying our shoes. These are all actions that we do that can be seen or heard by others. However, behaviour is not a thought, opinion, or idea – as these can’t be observed. For example, if you were excited for a movie with friends. Behaviour may be smiling or talking about the movie. But the thoughts of excitement, and possibly anticipating what might happen in the movie are not observable actions, and therefore, not behaviours.

Another aspect we must understand, is that behaviour happens for a reason. We will discuss this more in-depth in the module, however, it is important to introduce the idea that behaviour



serves a function. This may be to gain attention, avoid work, or many other motives, but behaviour is learned to achieve these functions.

So, as we continue through this module and apply this knowledge to real life, I would like you to always think about why a behaviour might be occurring, or what is the function of behaviour? These are not always easy questions to answer, but through the next few videos, hopefully you will learn some skills that can help with this.

Thus, at the end of this short video, we have a full definition of behaviour: an observable action that occurs within an environmental context and serves a purpose for the individual. So now that we know what is behaviour, in the next video we will look at operationally defining a behaviour.

Thanks for watching!

### **M4T2: Operational Definitions**

Hi, in this video we will build off our understanding of what is a behaviour and look at defining a behaviour. We will focus on providing an operational definition for a behaviour, why operational definitions are important, and how to create them.

So, what is an operational definition? An operational definition for behaviour is a description that is observable, measurable, and objective. These definitions are concrete and description and should be written in a way that would allow any person to step into a situation and identify the behaviour. I find operational definitions make the most sense in examples.

If Johnny commonly interrupts class, we might want to call this behaviour “interrupts class.” However, this alone has a bit of ambiguity around it, and depending on the individual, actions that are deemed to “interrupt class” may be different. For example, some educators may only deem noises that create a break in the class flow to be an interruption, other educators may deem any distracting noise as an interruption, and some may measure an interruption based on the effect it has on the attention of the other students.

We can operationally define the behaviour of “interrupts class” to be more detailed and concrete to combat this ambiguity. An example of an operational definition would be: “any vocal activity from the student while a teacher or peer is speaking.” As you can see, this definition is much more objective, and allows us to better observe and collect data on this specific behaviour.

But why are these operational definitions important? The first reason, like we discussed above, is it gives us an objective definition of behaviour that we can begin to measure and collect data for. Operational definitions are also important because they eliminate ambiguity. These definitions eliminate subjectivity and focuses on the actions we are trying to observe. This prevents individuals from gathering data such as, “Johnny interrupted the class because he does not respect when others are speaking,” which are very subjective and biased in the understanding of the behaviour. Having better data supports better efforts at adapting behaviours, and better supporting children with ASD.



Another very important reason for operationally defining a behaviour is that it promotes consistency among multiple observers for a behaviour. For example, for Johnny, if the educational assistant, music teacher, and gym teacher are all helping to collect data “interrupts class” could mean different things for each person. Johnny getting up from his desk might be an interruption; Johnny dropping a pencil and going to pick it up might be an interruption; Johnny asking a question without raising his hand might be an interruption; Johnny fidgeting at his desk might be an interruption. As you can see, there are a number of behaviours that some people would call an interruption, while others might only be looking for vocalizations – with an operational definition we eliminate this ambiguity so that we can record data objectively, accurately, and consistently. With everyone on the same page, this supports better understanding of the behaviour, and better data collection.

Now that we understand what an operational definition is, and why they are important, let’s take a quick look at how to create an operational definition. No fear, they are easy to do!

We begin by identifying the behaviour. Next, we should use concrete or non-subjective terms to describe the behaviour. For example, instead of the term “interrupt” we said, “vocalization from student that is not initiated by the teacher, during the time a teacher or peer is speaking.” Or for “obsessed with trains” we could more objectively define this as “initiates a conversation about trains.”

Defining the behaviour using concrete descriptions is the most important part of creating an operational definition. When appropriate, we can also try to include the context or sequence of events that take place in a behaviour. For example, if a child has difficulty staying seated during carpet time, we could operationally define this to include this setting: “Stands up and leaves the carpeted area for any duration of time, excluding requested breaks.” That’s really as simple as it is!

Let’s take a look at operationally defining one more behaviour. If a child is “mean to others” we may choose to operationally define this as: “bumps and pushes students when in the classroom.” Although this may only be part of being “mean to others,” examining bumps and pushes in the classroom will give more accurate data and targeted interventions, leading to more effective results. Sometimes, a support strategy aimed at one particular behaviour can have broader effects and impact other behaviours, such as pushing on the playground, as well.

That concludes this video on operational definitions. In this video we looked at what is an operational definition, why they are important, and how to create these definitions. I hope this video was helpful and in the next video, we will discuss the ABCs of behaviour. Thanks for watching!

### **M4T3: ABCs of Behaviour**

Hi, in this module we will learn about the ABC framework of behaviour. As we learned in the “what is behaviour” video, behaviour is: an observable action that occurs in the context of the environment and serves a purpose for the individual. In other words, a behaviour has an environmental context that may initiate the behaviour, an action that is observable, and a reason for why this occurs. The ABC framework works directly into this, breaking down the antecedent, behaviour, and consequence, or in other words, looking at the behaviour within its context, over time, to understand the function behind a behaviour.



Let's start by providing a bit more clarification to these terms while working through an example of raising our hand. The antecedent is the environmental context or event that occurs before a behaviour. This may be an interaction between people, for example something the teacher says, or an event in the environment, such as music in the background.

The B in ABC stands for behaviour and is the observable action itself. In this case it would be the action of raising our hand.

Lastly the C in ABC stands for consequence. Understanding the consequence of behaviour involves figuring out what occurs directly after the behaviour and how it may reinforce the behaviour. This can help figure out what was achieved by the behaviour. In this case, the consequence of our behaviour of raising our hand is that we were able to have the teacher come over and ask her a question. These positive outcomes help strengthen this behaviour so that we continue to line-up to change classes.

With the patterns in antecedent, behaviour, and consequence, we can begin to construct hypotheses as to why the behaviour is occurring, which we can later test with various support strategies. Almost counter-intuitively, try not to focus as much on the behaviour itself, but the antecedent and consequence, and how the behaviour fits into the pattern of these. In this case, the function of the behaviour was to gain the attention of the instructor. Raising our hand was the behaviour that helped us achieve this.

This was an example in which the ABCs and function of behaviour were fairly obvious, however, with the same method and data collection, which we will cover in Behaviour 2, we can create hypotheses for the functions of other behaviours.

One more thing we should be aware of is Setting Events. A setting event is an antecedent that is more distant from the behaviour. They increase or decrease the probability that a behaviour will occur. For example, if we look at our previous behaviour of raising our hand, if we happen to have a bad headache that day, we would be less likely to want to ask a question and raise our hand. The headache would be the setting event that influences how the environment affects our behaviour.

This understanding of the ABCs of behaviour and functions of behaviour is crucial for supporting children with behavioural challenges. I realize that this topic covered a lot of information, so in the next video, we will discuss more into functions of behaviour and go through a few examples to help better understand these concepts. Thanks for watching and see you in the next one!

#### **M4T4: Functions of Behaviour**

Hi, in the last video, we covered the ABCs of behaviour as a way to understand the functions of behaviour. In this video we will continue this discussion and go through a few examples of behaviours.

Throughout this topic, we have emphasized that behaviours serve a function. In other words, a behaviour has an environmental context that may initiate the behaviour, an action that is observable, and a reason for why this occurs. When a certain consequence occurs, this



reinforces our behaviour so that we learn to continue exercising that behaviour to achieve that function. Many times, behaviour is random and we learn it as it becomes associated with reinforcement and/or punishment over time.

Therefore, by looking at the patterns of antecedents, behaviours, and consequences of a behaviour, we can hypothesize the function behind the behaviour.

Let's start with a simple example of waving to someone. The antecedents in this scenario would be that we see someone that we are familiar. The behaviour is to wave at the person, and the consequence is that the person waves back. Thus, the function of the behaviour of to gain attention from the other person. Having the person acknowledge us, and wave back is a positive aspect that then reinforces this behaviour.

Sometimes, like the above example, the functions of a behaviour may seem obvious, but other time they are harder to deduce. For example, children with ASD often struggle with transitions between activities, and perhaps we have a student, Amy, who at times cries and shouts when switching between tasks. We should start by operationally defining the behaviour: crying and shouting for durations longer than 2 minutes when switching between scheduled activities. Now that we have an operational definition of the behaviour, we can pay attention to gather information on antecedent and consequence.

In this case, we realize after consistent observation that Amy behaves like this primarily when switching from free activity time, where Amy plays with jigsaw puzzles to a different activity. This would be our antecedent of behaviour. We also realize in this hypothetical situation, that because of these outbursts, we often allow Amy to continue playing with the puzzles to avoid disrupting the class. This consequence, means that Amy is able to avoid or delay changing activities to play longer. So, if we connect the antecedent and consequence, we could hypothesize that this behaviour serves the function of escaping the next activity and to continue playing. Only with the function of behaviour understood, can we successfully implement supportive strategies. Now that we know this, we can utilize some antecedent or consequence targeted strategies to assist with this, but we will discuss this later in the module.

Let's go through one last example of student that shouts and throws materials when presented with math desk work. The antecedent is that the math desk work is presented, the behaviour is that the student shouts and throws materials, and the consequence would be that the student is sent to the principal's office. As you might have guessed, at the principal's office, the student no longer has to do his math work, and we could hypothesize that the function of this behaviour is to avoid math.

Understanding these functions of behaviour is important in guiding the support strategies to help manage these challenging behaviours. Of course, in real life, understanding the function of behaviour requires consistent data collection, which we discuss in Behaviour 2. Often, once we understand the function, we can teach and/or reinforce appropriate behaviours that achieve the same function, so the student is able to satisfy their needs and desires in a socially appropriate way. To help further understand functions of behaviour, in the next video, we will take a look at the 4 functions of behaviour. Thank you for watching!

#### **M4T5: 4 Functions of Behaviour**



Hi, now that we have an understanding that behaviours have various functions, let's look at categorizing these functions. Not only will this help us understand behaviours, but will also guide the types of strategies and interventions that can be implemented to support children on the autism spectrum.

We can breakdown functions of behaviour into 4 main groups, Sensory, Escape, Attention, and Tangibles – which we can remember using the acronym SEAT. Let's begin by briefly discussion what each one.

Automatically reinforcing behaviour, generally referred to as “sensory”, are behaviours that emerge due to satisfaction of a bodily desire or need. These behaviours are reinforced internally, and because of this the consequence of the behaviour may be difficult to observe. Behaviours that serve a sensory function can often be demonstrated across all environments, even when nobody else is around.

For example, a common sensory behaviour that we demonstrate is scratching a bug bite. The antecedent for this behaviour is getting stung by a mosquito, the behaviour is scratching, and the observable consequence is the that you stop scratching it for a while, most likely because it stopped itching. Another example more specific to sensory processing challenges may be humming. Some individuals with ASD enjoy the vibrating feeling that humming creates in the throat, and because of this reinforces the behaviour, although this is not the case with all students. These automatically reinforcing behaviours are also commonly known as “stimming.”

In terms of what can be done to support children that demonstrate automatic behaviours that may be disruptive or limiting to a child's learning, it is best to seek advice of a medical or behavioural professional. Many of these behaviours help children feel calm, stay focused, and satisfy sensory needs for stimulation or relief, so restricting these behaviours may negatively impact the child. We can try introducing the child to self-management techniques, or try to teach and reinforce behaviours that allow a child to satisfy their bodily needs in a more socially appropriate way. Remember, it is also okay to allow a child to take a break to manage these sensory needs, as we would normally call a sensory break.

The next behaviour in the SEAT acronym is escape. Escape behaviours involve escaping or avoiding certain situations or people. For example, if a child is trying to avoid school work, they throw their work onto the floor. In other cases, children may physically get-up and leave the area, which is common during carpet time at early grade levels.

To help address these behaviours, we should first set clear expectations of the task and behaviour for the class, ensuring that we follow through on these expectations. In addition, we can try using first-then boards/cards, visual schedules, and social stories. For the interests of time, we won't cover these strategies in this video, but step-by-step guides are available on this site, and other videos in this module cover these support tools.

Sometimes, children may engage in challenging behaviour in order to receive attention. For attention seeking behaviours, we need to realize the ways in which we give attention, both during and away from these behaviours, as this reinforces these actions. Children may also be looking for certain types or any kind of attention. For example, when we tell a joke, we want positive attention through smiling and laughing, but other times, we may seek any kind of



attention to feel noticed. Children with developmental disabilities may be particularly prone to being reinforced by disapproving or more “negative attention.”

The three main strategies we can utilize in addressing attention-**motivated** behaviours, are to teach and reinforce more appropriate alternatives to seeking attention, give positive attention multiple times throughout the day (including praise), and try to ignore when undesired attention seeking behaviour occurs. In some cases, this is not practical, but instead, we can still give reduced intervention when handling the scenario, such as no eye contact, speaking minimally and only using short phrases. Some alternative ways to seek attention can be as easy as putting up their hand, saying “excuse me,” or tapping someone on the shoulder.

The last function of behaviour is access to tangibles. These are behaviours that are carried out because they want an item or want to be part of an activity. An example of this may be hitting a child to get a toy.

Some things that we can do to support children that demonstrate inappropriate behaviours related to accessing tangibles are to teach a child to accept “no”; teach appropriate ways to request, such as “can I please use that toy after you?”; control access to tangibles; and try to increase the variety of interests in items or activities that a child may have, although this can be challenging as children with ASD often have restricted interests.

That concludes this video on the 4 functions of behaviour: sensory, escape, attention, and tangible items. If you have trouble remembering these, just remind yourself of SEAT. Thank you for watching, and in the next video, we will look at behaviour as a communication tool.

#### **M4T6: Behaviours as a Communication Tool**

Hi, in this video we will take a look at behaviour as a form or substitute of functional communication. To start, if we look at the four functions of behaviour, sensory, escape, attention, and access to tangibles, and reflect on our own behaviours, there’s one thing we should realize: behaviour communicates. Some communication takes the form of vocal speech, some an augmented communication system, and in absence of those, challenging behaviour may be used to communicate wants and needs.

Reviewing our ABCs of behaviour, we can understand behaviour as what happens-between the antecedent and the consequence. Or in other words, a way to access or avoid something when triggered to do so. This is often the purpose of communication; we deliver a message to achieve a desired consequence, whatever that may be.

For example, a communication behaviour that serves the function gaining a tangible item might be “may I borrow a pen.” Attention may be “excuse me, I have a question,” and escape of sensory may be “I’m getting a headache, I’m going to step outside for a few minutes.”

However, as we have learned, social communication challenges are part of the core criteria necessary for a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder, meaning our children can struggle with such communication. For students, due to their challenges in conveying a message, an alternative and potentially socially inappropriate behaviour may arise. When the consequence of the behaviour ends up achieving the originally desired outcome, it reinforces this behaviour as a substitute for functional communication.



For example, if Johnny does not know, or has challenges asking another student “can I play with that toy?” an alternative behaviour may be to hit during activity time. If the other student drops the toy and leaves because they are upset, then Johnny has now achieved his objective of getting the toy. Because the behaviour is effective, the child now learns that they can hit others to get a toy, or in other words, reinforcing the behaviour.

Since this problematic behaviour arose due to communication issues, teaching functional communication may be a solution. Remember, children with ASD, like all kids, want to be good kids that are liked by peers and adults. It is important that they are clearly told of expectations so that they know what is appropriate and what is not, while also being taught ways to meet their needs and desires in appropriate ways.

For example, we can teach Johnny to ask his peers “may I play with that toy?” as well as the possible consequences, “yes,” “no,” and “after I’m done” and appropriate responses. We may choose to explicitly teach these, but using social stories could be very helpful as well. We could create or find one similar to “Sometimes I want to play with a toy someone else is using.” “I can ask, ‘may I play with that toy?’” “If they say yes, I can play and might have fun!” “Sometimes I will have to wait until they are done and that is okay.” “Sometimes they will say ‘no,’ and that is okay too!” “I can find another toy to play with.” We would then reinforce through candy, praise, or other things that the child enjoys when they demonstrate these skills.

Now that we understand that some inappropriate behaviours arise due to challenges or misunderstandings in communication, we can try teaching communication to address challenging behaviours. If you feel uncomfortable, please reach out to a behavioural specialist, and for more complex behaviours, it is advised to have guidance from a professional.

Thank you for watching, and in the next video, we will take a closer look at reinforcement.

#### **M4T7: Reinforcement**

Hi, so far in this module we have mentioned “reinforcement” many times, and I hope it has been clear what is meant by reinforcing behaviours. Now that we are about to move into the section of the module where we cover strategies, it is best to have a more in-depth discussion around reinforcement.

So, what is reinforcement? Quite simply, reinforcement strengthens a behaviour, making it more likely to occur again. When something good happens immediately following a particular behaviour, the chances of us demonstrating that behaviour again increases. Essentially, reinforcement is rewarding a behaviour, whether that be socially, physiologically, or otherwise, so that it will happen more often.

For example, if we are learning to play golf and are being taught the proper form for a swing. The behaviour would be swinging the club and hitting the ball. If we do this well and see the ball go far, this makes us want to follow the proper form more often. With children, we can think of this as “catching a child being good!” The more we support appropriate behaviour, the more it will occur.



Behaviours do not have to be always reinforced as well. Intermittent reinforcement, where the behaviour is only reinforced sometimes can be very powerful as well. Think about the golf swing; although we may only hit it far once every three or four times, we still continue to strive to improve our swing.

So, what about punishment? In terms of behaviour, whereas reinforcement increases behaviour after it occurs, punishment is a consequence that decreases behaviour. Punishment is an action that results in a negative consequence so that a behaviour will happen less. We should always use reinforcement and never punishment – we strive to increase appropriate behaviours.

As we have learned, behaviour serves a function; one of the reasons why punishment is not recommended is that it includes an unpleasant or undesired consequence, without giving them an alternative way to serve that function. Instead, if we teach and reinforce appropriate behaviours that serve that same function, by reinforcing that behaviour, the inappropriate one will naturally be used less. Ultimately, our goal would be to help the child replace the inappropriate behaviour with one that satisfies the same function. There are a variety of other reasons why we should avoid punishment as well, so please remember, always reinforce rather than punish.

Additional terminology that is good to understand is the difference between positive and negative reinforcement. It is best to think of this in the same terms as math. Positive reinforcement involves adding something to reward an individual, such as giving praise or a candy. If Mary washes her hands properly, we give her a candy. Negative reinforcement involves taking something away that is undesirable, such as taking away homework or maybe ending class early – not saying that class is undesirable but may be less fun than lunch break. In all kinds of reinforcement, we should try our best to couple this with praise for all of our students.

One great tool I want to bring up is a First/Then Card, which can be used with activities and helping students focus on certain tasks. The idea is that we can visually show a student that to **first** complete an activity, and **then** afterwards be able to do something they like. This way, the desired activity helps reinforce focus on school or desired activities.

For example, if a child really wants to play with building blocks, but we want them to finish their spelling work. We can use a first/then card to show, first: spelling work, then: building blocks. Letting the student know that after they complete their work, they can enjoy their activity. In most cases, the child chooses the “then.”

That brings us to the end of this video. In this video we discussed what is reinforcement, why reinforcement is better than punishment, types of reinforcement, and first/then cards. Thank you for watching, and in the next video we will discuss antecedent targeted strategies.

#### **M4T8: Antecedent Targeted Strategies**

Hi, in these next two videos we will take a look at some strategies we can utilize to address challenging behaviours students may have. As a disclaimer, we are going to suggest some easy strategies and tools you can use within the classroom. For more complex or challenging behaviours, it should be the role of a behavioural specialist to design suitable interventions. At



any point that you do not feel comfortable implementing any of the tools we discuss, please reach out to an Applied Behaviour Analyst for help.

In this video, we will look at antecedent targeted strategies. The antecedent is the same antecedent as in the ABC framework. If we go back to antecedent-behaviour-consequence, the idea is that if we can prevent or influence the antecedent from occurring, we can prevent the behaviour from happening by itself. In other words, we modify the environment to decrease the chances of an undesired behaviour from occurring.

To start with an everyday example, let's think about waving at our friend. Like we identified previously, the antecedent of the behaviour is seeing our friend, the behaviour is to wave at the individual, and the consequence is that our friend waves back. The function of the behaviour is attention seeking.

If the antecedent were to be changed by replacing our friend with a stranger, we would probably not wave at the person. In this case, we would not engage in the behaviour because the antecedent is not presented.

Another quick example is tying our shoe laces. If we have shoes with no laces, than the behaviour of tying our shoes never occurs.

Now that we have a grasp on the concept of an antecedent targeted behaviour, let's look at classroom example. If we have a student, Johnny, that throws tantrums and engages in other inappropriate behaviour when we change activities, what antecedent targeted strategies can we use?

The first step is to understand the function of behaviour. Knowing that students with ASD often feel anxiety with unexpected transitions between activities and after data collection, for the purposes of this example, let's say we hypothesize that Johnny is engaging in escape/avoidance behaviour, with the function of delaying or avoiding the next activity. The antecedent of this behaviour is changes in activity that are unexpected for Johnny, causing anxiety and stress. Of course, we cannot prevent changes in activity, but we can help Johnny be more aware of such changes. From here, there are actually a number of strategies we can implement.

One thing we can implement is a visual schedule, that visually depicts the when and what transitions will occur. We can work with Johnny to help him keep updated with the visual schedule so he understands when changes will occur, to prevent stress associated with unexpected changes.

In addition, we can try using a visual clock or timer. These are support tools that help show the passage of time and how much time is left. This way, Johnny knows when to start preparing for a transition and wrap-up his current activity. Giving verbal and possibly visual reminders are also great ways to help achieve this. For all support tools, we should reinforce Johnny with praise when he wraps-up and transitions successfully.

Thus, by addressing the antecedent of behaviour, we can help support Johnny to feel more comfortable through transitions between activities. Because Johnny is aware of these changes,



he experiences less stress and anxiety, preventing him from throwing tantrums and engaging in other inappropriate behaviours.

I hope this video helps you understand antecedent targeted strategies to help support students with ASD. Other antecedent targeted strategies can be utilizing interests in class examples, creating sensory inclusive settings, and visual choice boards to name a few. Please explore other resources and be creative about ways you can target antecedents to support your students. Thank you for watching, and in the next video we will cover consequence targeted strategies.

#### **M4T9: Consequence Targeted Strategies**

In the last video, we talked about the use of antecedent targeted strategies to influence the frequency of a behaviour from occurring. In this video, we will look at consequence targeted strategies, focusing on the C portion of the ABC framework.

As we learned previously, it is the consequence of behaviour and thus, the ability of a behaviour to satisfy a certain function that reinforces it. By targeting the consequence of an undesirable behaviour we can reinforce appropriate behaviours to occur more. The focus here is to reinforce desirable behaviours to substitute unwanted behaviour.

An example of utilizing consequence targeted strategies is teaching a dog to sit. I am in no ways trying to compare children to dogs, but it is a good way to learn this concept. When we train a dog to sit, we start by getting the dog to sit down, and then reinforce this behaviour by giving a treat and praising "good boy!" We then repeat this process many times until the behaviour is learned until no treats are necessary. By manipulating the consequence of what occurs when the dog sits down, a reward in the form of a treat, we are able to shape the dog's behaviour to sit when we tell him to.

In a classroom setting, our student Mary, may always blurt out and interrupt the class. In this case, the function of this behaviour is to gain the attention of the teacher. If this is the undesirable behaviour we are trying to decrease, we should focus on increasing the appropriate behaviour, raising our hand through consequence targeted strategies. We choose to reinforce raising hands as it achieves the same function of gaining a teacher's attention.

Let's map this out using our ABCs. The antecedent of this behaviour may be that the teacher says something that the student is unclear about; the behaviour is the Mary raising her hand; and the consequence of behaviour is normally that we give Mary our attention and give her a chance to ask a question or comment.

To further reinforce this behaviour, a consequence targeted strategy may be as simple as giving praise and a candy every time Mary raises her hand. "Thank you for putting up your hand, great job!" If we wanted to, we could slowly fade out the candy reward by giving it less and less over time.

In other cases, we might try to reinforce a behaviour that does not serve the same function as the inappropriate behaviour. Instead, we are trying to reinforce a target behaviour to have the child behave more appropriately or stay focused on a task. For example, Mary might not like practicing spelling. Many times, when the class is practicing spelling, Mary will be disengaged



from the task, make sounds and other distractions, or try to get crayons to colour. Because Mary colours quietly, it might be tempting to let her colour as this does not disrupt others around her.

Instead, this might be a good opportunity to utilize a first/then card. Knowing that Mary wants to colour, we can utilize this interest to help Mary focus on her school work. First: practice spelling, Then: colouring. This way, Mary knows that when she completes the task at hand, she will be rewarded by getting to colour. We are utilizing colouring as the consequence to reinforce the desired behaviour of focusing on spelling. Remember, we can and should use other methods of reinforcement, such as praise, as well.

That concludes this topic on consequence targeted strategies. The key takeaway is that consequence targeted strategies uses various methods of reinforcement to increase desired behaviours.

Thank you for watching and in the next 2 videos, we will cover an in-depth example to help summarize all the concepts we have covered in the Behaviour 1 module.

#### **M4T10: In-Depth Example Pt 1**

Hi, in the last two videos of this behaviour 1 module, we will look into an in-depth example to summarize all the content we have covered! Let's get straight into it.

We have a student, Johnny, who presents challenging behaviours during carpet time. He tends to get up, walk around, and disrupt the rest of the class as well. In order to ensure we properly define the behaviour, and allow for data collection, we should start by creating an operational definition. We can use: during carpet time, the student stands up and walks around for more than 5 seconds at a time.

Data collection would follow next. Data collection is extremely valuable, and important to do well – that's why we will cover it in a separate module, behaviour 2. Let's assume that we were able to gather data on the ABCs of the behaviour and are able to hypothesize the function of behaviour.

For antecedent, we have the student is sitting during carpet time instruction. For behaviour, we have the operational definition from before, and the consequence of this behaviour is that by standing up and walking around, Johnny avoids part of carpet.

So, what is the function this behaviour serves? If we go back to the 4 functions of behaviour, the consequences of this behaviour relate most to escape/avoidance and possibly attention. However, from our observation, it seems that Johnny is more disinterested in what is being taught rather than trying to attract the attention of the instructor and peers, as our data shows that Johnny does not engage in any noises or other movements that might draw more attention. From this assumption, we could reasonably hypothesize that this behaviour of walking away during carpet time is an escape/avoidance behaviour that serves the purpose of avoiding carpet time instruction.

As you can see, this is an area in which data collection can help clarify as well. We could collect data on the reaction of peers and frequency of this behaviour to help determine if this



behaviour is for attention or escape. Sometimes, it is very difficult to figure out the function of a behaviour, so we make a hypothesis and can then test it using antecedent or consequence targeted strategies. If we deem our test to be ineffective, it helps guide us that we likely have not understood this function of behaviour correctly.

Now that we have a hypothesis for the function of this behaviour, let's stop this video here. In the next video, we will take a look into some antecedent and consequence scenarios we can apply to help Johnny sit during carpet time. Thank you for watching!

### **M4T11: In-Depth Example Pt 2**

Hi, in this last video we will wrap-up our in-depth example, in which Johnny has trouble staying seated. We have hypothesized that the function of the behaviour is to escape/avoid during carpet time.

So, now that we have hypothesized the function for behaviour, what are some ways we can help Johnny stay seated?

If we look at antecedent targeted strategies, one way that we can decrease the occurrence of this behaviour is to try to make carpet time more enjoyable for Johnny. One strategy we may use is to try incorporating Johnny's interests into the lessons. For example, if we are teaching math and know that Johnny has a particular fascination with fish, we can incorporate fish into the examples we use. "2 fish plus 3 fish is equal to 5 fish." Utilizing visuals of fish can also help Johnny and the class stay engaged. If we are doing reading time, we can try to find a story with fish to incorporate this interest. This way, we are influencing the antecedent, instruction during carpet time, to be more enjoyable, so that Johnny is more engaged and possibly more motivated to remain sitting.

Another way to increase engagement for the entire class is to increase participation for each lesson. If we are again teaching  $2+3=5$ , we can get students count two fingers on one hand, and three fingers on the other hand, keeping them more involved in the lesson. For reading time, we can have children act out parts of the story, to help them burn a bit of energy and stay involved. I am sure you can think of many more creative ways to involve your students, and participation helps engage students with ASD as well.

Not all antecedent targeted strategies need to increase sitting as well. Another way we can approach this is to incorporate breaks for the entire class to stretch and refocus. From our data, we may realize that the behaviour of walking away only occurs after 20 minutes of instruction. In this case, the antecedent of the behaviour would be sitting for more than 20 minutes. We can then incorporate breaks 15 minutes to avoid this to prevent the antecedent from occurring, thus, keeping the behaviour from occurring.

For consequence targeted strategies, we should focus on reinforcing and increasing the behaviour we want to see, rather than focusing solely on the behaviour we are trying to decrease. By increasing the frequency of the appropriate behaviour, the challenging one will naturally decrease. In this case, the behaviour we are looking to reinforce will be sitting on the carpet. It would probably be best to operationally define this as well to measure the success of our strategy, but for the purposes of this video we will skip this step.



One easy way that we can increase Johnny's time sitting on the carpet is to reinforce this behaviour through praise, a candy treat, and/or other things Johnny likes, such as a high-five. If we have the help of an educational assistant, we can have them sit with Johnny, and for every 5 to 10 minutes Johnny stays seated we can give him a high five. After carpet time we can praise Johnny "great job staying seated for 40 minutes today!" If we do not have an educational assistant, we can still praise Johnny for the amount of time he sat and reward him for that time, as well as encourage him to do it again and try to stay seated even longer the next day. By reinforcing Johnny by making him feel accomplished and appreciated for sitting it is likely that this behaviour may happen again in the future.

Another great tool we can implement is a first/then card. As we have covered before, we can utilize a first/then card to help Johnny focus on the current task by allowing him to do something enjoyable after. The "then" portion could even be as simple as a candy treat. First, carpet time, then, candy. Or if we know Johnny loves to play with the ocean themed jigsaw puzzles we have, we can have: first, carpet time, then, ocean puzzle. It is important to explicitly communicate the expectations of the current task at hand as well.

By doing this we are using the consequence of participating in an enjoyable activity to promote and reinforce the behaviour of sitting and listening during carpet time.

That concludes this in-depth example and this module on behaviour 1. We have covered what is behaviour, operational definitions, ABCs of behaviour, functions of behaviour, behaviour as communication, reinforcement, antecedent-targeted strategies, and consequence-targeted strategies. Thank you so much for watching, and I hope this module can help you better understand and support children with autism spectrum disorder. Thank you again, and hope you enjoyed it!

