


Promoting Environments That Prevent
Problem Behavior And Support
Life Quality

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Agenda

- Focus of adult services (vs. child services)
- Meaningful vs. nonmeaningful days
 - (an engaging lifestyle)
- Teaching to promote self-control
- Enhancing daily enjoyment
- Working with staff to provide quality environments
- Treating adults with IDD and autism with dignity




Basic Premise

- Absence or reduction of problem behavior increases quality of life
- The better one's quality of life, the less one engages in problem behavior




Qualifications

- Focus on adults with autism and other intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD)
- Focus on people with severe challenges



Services for Adults versus Children

- Similarities
 - Desire for quality
 - Importance of evidence-based approach
- Differences
 - Focus on here and now vs. future
 - Increased emphasis on life enjoyment and individual preferences
 - Staff resources




A Focus on Meaningful Days

- Long-standing issue: *life wasting*
- Especially an issue for adults with autism on the severe end of the spectrum
- Only about 20% are involved in integrated, community activities and life

How Most Adults with Severe Disabilities Spend Their Weekdays



- Over 70% do not work
- Among those that work, the job is usually part time and involves contract work
- There are notable exceptions
- Most spend their weekdays in congregate or center-based settings




Meaningful Days Require:

- Meaningful context
- Effective teaching services
 - (keep in mind reduced staffing)

General Continuum of Meaningful Activities for Adults with Disabilities


- DAY SUPPORT PROGRAMS & SETTINGS
 - **Usually Most Functional**
 - Working in a real job
 - Working in a supported job
 - Individual job placement
 - Work crews, enclaves, agency-based job
 - Sheltered, contract work
 - Individual table-top activities in a congregate setting
 - **Usually Least Functional**



References for Meaningful Skills and Activities




- Reid, D.H., Parsons, M.B., & Rotholz, D.A. (2015). *Positive Behavior Support Training Curriculum, 3rd Edition*. American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities.
- Reid, D.H., & Parsons, M.B. (2017). *Quality Activities in Center-Based Programs for Adults with Autism: Moving from Nonmeaningful to Meaningful*. Elsevier Press.




Teaching To Support Individual Control

- Impact of support movement
- To develop skills to participate in meaningful daily activities
- To learn to meet one's needs without problem behavior
- To enhance daily enjoyment




Core Essence of Effective Teaching

- *Frequent* presentation of functional learning opportunities and trials
 - For children, it's what makes special education special
 - For adults, it requires naturalistic teaching




Naturalistic Teaching

- Teaching at the moment a skill is needed
- Also called incidental teaching or embedded teaching
- Naturalistic teaching is a key component of support: instructing an individual to do part or all of an activity instead of doing it for the person (e.g., opening a car door, turning off a light, selecting foods at the grocery store)




Think:

- Before doing it for an individual, can you teach the person to do part or all of it him/herself?
- SWAT
 - Say
 - Wait and watch
 - Act out
 - Wait and watch
 - Touch to guide
 - (and of course, reinforce)




Resource for Naturalistic Teaching

- Parsons, Reid, & Lattimore (2009).
Increasing independence of adults with
autism in community activities: A brief,
embedded teaching strategy. *Behavior
Analysis in Practice, 2*, 40-48.




Evidence-Based Strategies for Promoting Happiness

- Establishing relationships
- Providing daily choices
- Identifying and promoting routine access to preferences
- Making disliked but necessary activities more enjoyable




Familiarizing New Staff for
Working with
Adults with Severe Disabilities:
A Case for Relationship Building

Parsons, M.B., Bentley, E., Solari,
T., & Reid, D.H. (2016). *Behavior
Analysis in Practice*, 9, 211-222.




Developing a Relationship: Summary

- Spend time doing things that the person likes to do
 - *Fun Time Program*
- Establish familiarity (phase-in)
- *Occurrence of happiness indices during interactions suggests a good relationship*




Increasing Happiness

- Providing individual choices
- Choice opportunities must be provided based on individual skill level for responding with a meaningful choice



Increasing Happiness

- The power of pleasant social attention
- Impact on *some* problem behavior




Group Interaction Skills

- Respecting dignity of adult status
- Distribution of attention
 - Focus on positive or common social vs. negative
 - To promote meaningful engagement
 - To enhance enjoyment
 - To reduce (some) problem behavior




References for Group Interaction

- Distribution of attention
 - Reid (2016). *Promoting happiness among adults with autism and other severe disabilities*.
www.behaviordevelopmentsolutions.com




Making Undesired Activities More Enjoyable: Example

- *Preference-Based Teaching*
 - Reid & Green (2005)
 - www.behaviordevelopmentsolutions.com
- Rationale
 - Some learners engage in challenging behavior to escape or avoid teaching programs
 - If teaching programs are fun, no need for challenging behavior




Importance of Accurately Identifying and Respecting Preferences

- Essence of person-centered supports and services
- Promotes meaningful engagement (leisure activity, work behavior)
- Promotes enjoyment




Identifying Activity Preferences

- Caregiver opinion
 - Advantages
 - Disadvantages
- Evidence-based, systematic preference assessments
 - Multi-stimulus without replacement (for people with more severe disabilities)
 - Situational assessment (for people with less severe disabilities and functional communication skills)




Don't Forget Support Staff

- It is unlikely staff will effectively promote happiness among individuals they support if the staff are frequently discontented with their work environment



Resource for Working with Staff to Overcome Problem Behavior

- Reid, D.H., & Parsons, M.B. (2018). *Working with staff to overcome challenging behavior among people who have challenging behavior: A guide for getting support plans carried out. 2nd Edition.*
www.behaviordevelopmentsolutions.com



*And all of the above with
DIGNITY*

- From . . .
- Reid, Rosswurm, & Rotholz (2018). No less worthy: Recommendations for behavior analysts treating adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities with dignity. *Behavior Analysis in Practice, 11*, 71-70




How We Speak: Recommendations

- Attend to local customs
- Use people-first language
 - Refrain from speaking in front of people with IDD without their involvement
 - Refer to people, not their behavioral characteristic(s)
 - Avoid “low functioning”
 - Respect adult status (prefixes, local customs)



How We Behave: Recommendations

- Escorting and traveling with adults with IDD
 - "side by side" walking
 - prompting
 - in groups
 - avoid "local segregation"



Dignity and the “Golden Rule”

- Treat others as you desire to be treated: a multi-cultural value (not to be taken for granted but to be trained and supervised among support staff)
- Practical guideline . . .



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