PROGRAM EVALUATION: FUNCTIONAL ANALYSIS AND TREATMENT FOR RULE-BREAKING BEHAVIOR

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Introduction

• In this example of the use of ABA at the DD-ISU, a functional analysis is described in the treatment of challenging behaviors with a youth who is dually diagnosed.

• The process for the development of an assessment and treatment approach for an adolescent male who had been displaying a large number of aggressive behaviors towards family and siblings is described.

• Target behaviors examined included: verbal aggression, physical aggression, and inappropriate boundaries.
Observation Number One

• “Jack” (pseudo name) was displaying aggressive behaviors that appeared to be increasing in the presence of certain staff members.

• Through a functional analysis of “Jack” engaging in rule breaking, it was determined that “Jack’s” behaviors were reinforced and maintained by negative attention.

• Observations in the unit indicated that all of the behaviors that were increasing in the unit were followed by the same consequence: Negative attention.
Observation Number Two

• “Jack” tended to push the limits with rules, which became evident through the functional analysis.
• It was hypothesized by the inter-professional team that these rule breaking behaviors were directly related to challenging behaviors for which “Jack” was admitted to the unit.
  – Fire setting
  – Aggression
  – Animal cruelty
Modified Functional Analysis

• Target Behavior:
  – Rule Breaking:
    • “Jack, remember the three rules…they are….”
    • List of rules were located on the desk

• Conditions Utilized:
  – Tangible, Demand, toy play
  – Positive and negative attention

• Results from the functional analysis of rule breaking indicated that “Jack’s” behaviors were a function of negative attention.
Occurrence of Target Behavior per Session (5 Minutes)

### Functional Analysis of Rule Breaking

- **Tangible**
- **Demand**
- **Toy Play**
- **Positive Attention**
- **Negative Attention**

**Session**

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8
- 9
- 10
- 11
- 12
- 13
- 14
- 15
- 16
- 17
- 18

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Rule Breaking Protocol

• Following the functional analysis, which helped to determine the function of the challenging behaviors that “Jack” was displaying, a rule breaking protocol was developed.

• Based on the LeBlanc, Hagopian, and Maglierie (2000), the use of a token economy can be utilized to reduce excessive and inappropriate behaviors for individuals with developmental disabilities.

• Therefore, the rule breaking protocol included a token reinforcement that occurred every 30 seconds for following the rule
  – Gradual increase increments
  – 10 minute sessions in highly controlled settings
Rule Breaking Protocol Continued

• Through the use of an analogue functional analysis, that indicated that “Jack’s” behaviors were a function of negative attention, the development of a token economy rule breaking protocol was designed for “Jack”.

• Target behaviors were tracked for a baseline period, an intervention phase, another baseline period, and then a modified intervention phase. These data indicated a large decline in rule breaking behaviors during the intervention phases.
Boundaries

Rule Breaking per 10 Minutes

Baseline

Intervention Phase

Baseline

Staff

Session

1 5 10 15 20 25 30 35 40 45 50 55 60 65 70 75

30 Sec 45 Sec 60 Sec 90 Sec 90 Sec 120 Sec 160 Sec 300 Sec

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Conclusions

- Functional analysis appears to be successful in assessing rule-breaking behavior.
- Based on the functional analysis, the treatment plan and token economy intervention was effective in reducing rule-breaking behaviors.