Objective

By participating in this session, the learner will be able to:

• Understand that different schedules of reinforcement are used for learning a new behavior versus encouraging persistence of a behavior
• Explain the likelihood of post-extinction burst and the implications for ignoring misbehavior
• Describe 6 types of punishment

No disclosures

• I have no relevant financial relationships with the manufacturers(s) of any commercial products(s) and/or provider of commercial services discussed in this CME activity.

• I do not intend to discuss an unapproved/investigative use of a commercial product/device in my presentation.
Multiple determinants of behavior in preschool children

- Temperament
- Cognitive Limitations
  - Generalizing salient characteristics of rule
  - Problem-solving is intuitive
- Magical thinking and egocentrism
- Language development
- Parent influences

ABC’s of Behavioral Modification

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Antecedent</td>
<td>Behavior</td>
<td>Consequence</td>
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Theories of conditioning

- Classical Conditioning (Pavlov)
  - Involves respondent behavior
  - Focuses on antecedent of behavior
- Operant Conditioning (Skinner)
  - Involves consequential behavior
  - Behavior is strengthened or weakened by events that follow
To encourage adoption of behavior

• Ask child – Be explicit or may \( \rightarrow \) superstitions
• To encourage adoption of complex behavior
  • Modeling
  • Shaping
• Reinforcement should be contingent on behavior and occur immediately
• The quickest way to establish a new behavior is to reinforce every time the behavior occurs

Reinforcement to maintain behavior

• Different schedules of reinforcement to maintain behavior:
  • Ratio schedule
  • Interval schedule
• Fixed ratio or interval schedule may \( \rightarrow \) variable performance
• Best way to achieve consistent and high-level performance is infrequent and random reinforcement

To decrease frequency of behavior

• Planned ignoring (Extinction) – consistent withholding of positive reinforcement (such as adult attention)
  • Post-extinction burst
  • Warning: Do NOT give reinforcement during post-extinction burst (otherwise \( \rightarrow \) infrequent and random reinforcement that will make behavior far more persistent)
Post-extinction burst

- Extent and duration will be greater if child has certain temperamental traits
  - High intensity
  - High task persistence
- Parents’ ability to refrain from giving in depends on
  - Situational context
  - Emotional state
  - Degree of supports
  - Knowledge

Recommend ignoring misbehavior?

- You should not recommend ignoring misbehavior unless the parent understands what is likely to occur and is able to tolerate ignoring behavior
- One other option is to reinforce incompatible behavior

Types of punishment

- Time out
- Disapproval (not psychological cruelty)
- Natural consequences
- Logical consequences
- Behavioral penalty
- Physical punishment
Time Out principles

• Withdrawing positive reinforcement for predetermined amount of time following occurrence of problem behavior – time out only works if there is quality “time in”
• Best for serious, low-frequency problem behavior
• If behavior functions to avoid or escape unwanted situation, then time out unlikely to be effective

Time Out guidelines

• Exclusionary time out best for 2-6 years of age
• Brief (1 minute per year of age)
• Give no more than one warning
• One phrase to give reason at beginning
• Brief explanation at end (no lecturing)
• Return to “time in” afterwards (no grudges)
• Only 1 or 2 target behaviors

Physical punishment

• Use very sparingly if at all – when other effective option not available AND seriousness of situation justifies use (e.g., very young children in life-threatening situation)
• Physical punishment meant to humiliate, not hurt
• Show parents something that works better – most people resort to physical punishment out of frustration and because overwhelmed – they would prefer not to use it
Possible practice changes

As a result of participating in this session, I plan to apply the following change in my practice:

- Provide parenting advice that incorporates information about principles of conditioning
- Avoid recommending ignoring misbehavior until ensuring parent understands likely post-extinction burst and appears able to implement successfully
- Discusses alternatives to physical punishment with families