



Topic 2, Part 4: Expanding on Major Themes

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

1. What is the function of a behavior?

The behavior's function is why a student engages in an activity or acts a certain way. Behaviors always have a function. Functions of behaviors can be broken down into four different areas: attention or connection seeking, communication of needs and wants, seeking escape or avoidance, and sensory feedback. The function seeking escape or avoidance may occur when a student faces a challenging task, an unfavorable setting, physical pain or discomfort, peer or staff ridicule, etc.

2. How do I reprimand the attention-seeking and avoidance behaviors of my students?

Students who engage in these forms of behaviors should not just have their needs ignored or dismissed. Needing attention/connection or wanting to escape from a task are feelings that all humans have. These feelings alone are not negative. The way that individuals go about communicating their needs is what may require remediation.

3. What is a mismatch between home and school?

A mismatch between home and school is seen when a student is in an educational setting that does not meet their needs or does not make them feel comfortable or understood by their peers. School professionals in most schools throughout the US are white and middle-class women while students and their families represent many types of diversity. School professionals are often trained and taught in a “one size fits all” approach. For example, many school staff members believe students with autism spectrum disorders (ASD) are always visual learners. Although many individuals with ASD are visual learners, many individuals with ASD are not. School professionals may not have had content specific to the range of diversity in their education experience. Additionally, school professionals may have limited exposure to diverse students and families during their training as well as diverse faculty, clinical supervisors, peers, etc. Each of these factors contribute to mismatches between home and school for our students.

4. How can I increase the self-management of my students?



Some techniques for increasing self-management of students involve:

- Ask students to set goals
 - Ask students to evaluate their performance
 - Explain to student what behavior resulted in reinforcement
 - Ask the student to relate part of the contingency for reinforcement
 - Ask the student to state the entire contingency for reinforcement
 - Involve students in choosing reinforcers and in determining their cost in terms of behavior
5. What are some common misconceptions about the FBA (Functional Behavior Assessment) and BIP (Behavior Intervention Plans) process?

One common misconception is that interventions are supposed to make the behavior disappear. Another misconception is that an IEP team can only complete one FBA. It is important to monitor interventions by frequent and consistent data collection. If data shows that an intervention is losing its effectiveness, a new FBA should be completed as the function of the behavior may have changed or the replacement behavior is no longer valued. For example, a student may frequently engage in knocking over their desk during math. Based on data collection, the functional behavior assessment (FBA) showed the function of the behavior was to escape from a non-preferred task. The teacher taught the student a replacement behavior to take a 5-minute break when the student felt overwhelmed. The student's behavior decreased for six weeks but then began to increase again. The IEP team met to review the data and determined that a new functional behavior assessment was needed.