ABCs of a Comprehensive Behavior Assessment

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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR & FOUNDER

Objectives

- Brief review of Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA)
- Contextual variables
- Anxiety = Avoidance/Escape
- Scatterplots
- Functional Analysis

Functional Behavior Assessment

- A **problem-solving process** for arriving at effective behavior support plans including:
  - Using a team planning format
  - Collecting information using a variety of data collection methods
  - Employing a solution focused problem-solving process

Functional Behavior Assessment

A process dedicated to evaluating behavior in order to:

(1) determine why the behavior is occurring

(2) inform person-centered support plans

Components of Functional Assessment

Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA) is a process for gathering information that can be used to maximize the effectiveness and efficiency of behavioral support (O'Neill et al., 1997)

► Indirect: semi-structured teacher/parent/student interview(s); archival data; checklists

► Direct:

   ► Interval/frequency/scatterplot data

   ► Descriptive: direct observations (ABC)

It is a Reactive Assessment

A Functional Assessment is Not:

A particular tool or assessment instrument

A one-shot meeting or observation

Intended to be conducted by a single person

Complete without direct data collection and analysis

Facilitating the FBA process

Clinician needs proficiency in:

- Data collection and interpretation
- Operant learning model
- Team facilitation
- Antecedent interventions
- Alternative skill instruction
- Development of incentive systems
- Response weakening interventions

The FBA Main Idea:
Behavior is Functional

- Common behavior functions
  - Escape
  - Tangible
  - Attention
  - Automatic Reinforcement

Functional Behavior Assessment is best conducted using a team to evaluate data and guide decision making.

Completing an FBA

- Gather background information
  - Who is the student?
  - Convene a team meeting
  - Conduct interviews
- Define the target behavior
- Develop an assessment plan
  - Data collection
  - Timelines
  - People responsible

- Conduct observations (direct data collection)
  - Antecedents
  - Behavior
  - Consequences
- Assess data
- Summarize and interpret the information
  - Team meeting to disseminate information

Scatterplots

Why are they useful?

- ▶ Provides information about the details of the target behaviors
- ▶ Identifies times of day/activities/setting when behavior is mostly observed
- ▶ Identifies when student is successful
- ▶ Can be used as visual representation

Scatterplot Behavioral Data Sheet

Name: _____   Month: _____

Directions: At the end of each timed interval, fill in the square indicating the the frequency of the target behavior observed during the interval.

Behavior(s) defined as: _____

☐ = nonbehavior   ◺ = 1-6 occurrences   ⊠ = 7-11 occurrences   ■ = 12 or more occurrences

Date:																								
8:30 AM																								
9:00 AM																								
9:30 AM																								
10:00 AM																								
10:30 AM																								
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3:00 PM																								

Scatter Plot Behavior Monitoring

Student: Jason
Dates: Feb. 1- Feb.10, 2010
Behavior Observed: Hitting others
Observer/Recorder: T.Vali

Activity	Time	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Breakfast	7:30 -7:45										
Breakfast	7:45-8:00										
AM Assembly	8:00-8:15	/		■	X		X		X	■	
AM Assembly	8:15-8:30	X	■	■	/	■	X	■	/	■	■
Calendar	8:30-8:45									/	
Calendar	8:45-9:00	X		/	X		■				
LA -reading	9:00-9:15					/			/		■
LA-reading	9:15-9:30	■	■	■	■	■		■	■	■	■
Free read	9:30-9:45										
Snack break	9:45-10:00										
Science	10:00-10:15	/		/			X		/		
Science	10:15-10:30			/			/		/	/	
Specials	10:30-10:45	X		X			■	/	/		
Specials	10:45-11:00	■	/	■	X		■		■		
Goal check	11:00-11:15										
Lunch	11:15-11:30										
Lunch	11:30-11:45	/	X	X	■	/	■	X	■	/	X
Self help skills	11:45-12:00										
Math (group)	12:00-12:15										
Math (group)	12:15-12:30	X		X	■	/	■	X	■	■	X
Math (ind)	12:30-12:45										
Social Studies	12:45-1:00				/	X			/	/	/
Social Studies	1:00-1:15				/						
Writing Activity	1:15-1:30	■	/	X	■	X	■	X	■	■	/
Oral Reading	1:30-1:45										
Break	1:45-2:00										
Goal Check	2:00-2:15										
Prepare for home	2:15-2:30	X	/	■	X	/	X	X	■	/	■
Dismissal	2:30-2:45		/		X		X	X	X		

Specials= M/W P.E. T/Th Music Friday=Computer Lab

The chart is mainly divided into 15 minute intervals. Displaying expected behavior 1 x= ▱

Displaying targeted behavior 2x = ⊠

Displaying targeted behavior > 2x ■

Variables Impacting Behavior

IT'S TIME TO TAKE A DEEPER DIVE

Contextual Variables

- Child-Based – learning difficulties, trauma, medical profile, psychiatric conditions
- Parent-Based – differences in expectations, level of supervision, communication, parenting styles
- Family-Based – socio economic status, dynamics, stressors, lack of support/involvement
- School-Based – frequent changes, lack of consistency, poor rapport with staff, inadequate resources & consistent
- Peer-Based – associations with peers, low involvement in extracurricular activities, evidence of bullying
- Community-Based – stressors outside of home, strong economic pulls, community resources

Ruling Out Legitimate Concerns

- Medical concerns
- Psychiatric concerns
- Trauma
- Learning difficulties that are not well understood
- School environment lacking in rich learning opportunities
- Nutrition
- Bedtime/Sleep hygiene

For example, school-avoidant youth endorse somatic complaints:

Stomachaches, headaches, & sleep problems

What about the anxious student?

Cycle of Anxiety via Negative Reinforcement
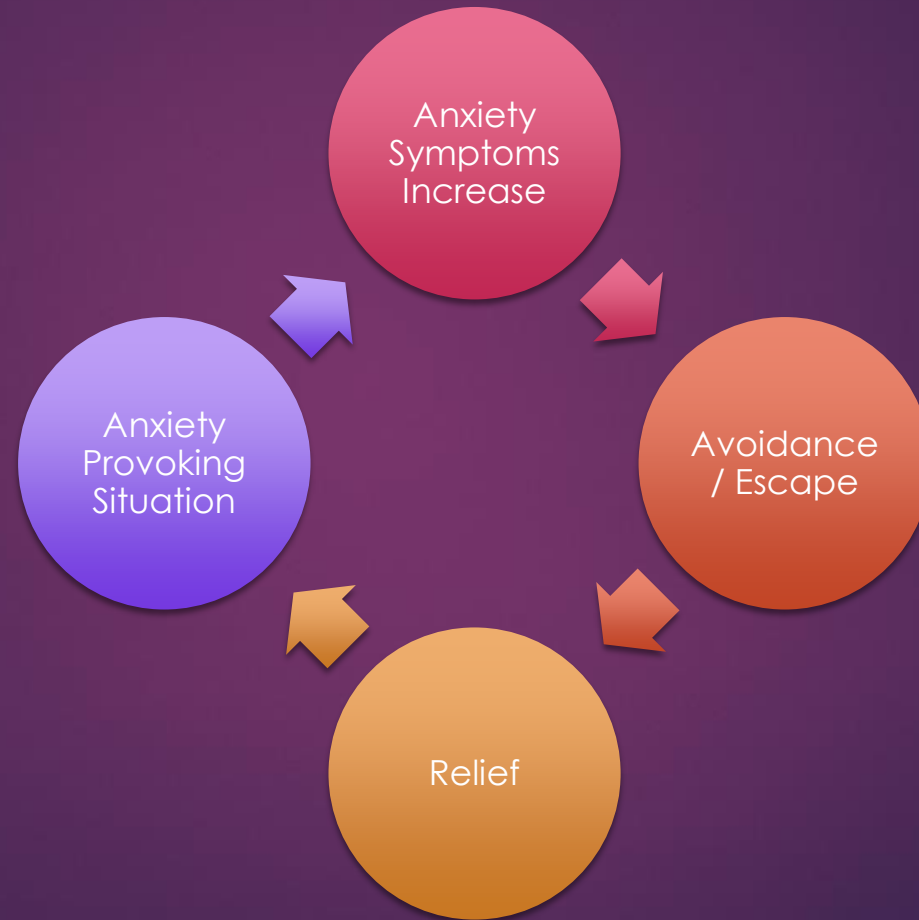
Avoidance/Escape

- Avoidance fuels Anxiety
- Encourages avoidance will not lead to long-term change
- Promotes a pattern
- Tendency to inadvertently reinforcing behavior

Sustained Reinforcement

School Refusal

Functional Analysis

Functional (experimental) Analysis

- Overview
  - Systematically exposing the individual to controlled conditions that mimic naturally occurring environmental events
  - Testing a variety of hypotheses as compared to a control condition to look for patterns in response
- Variations
  - Conducting brief conditions
  - Assessing for combined functions
  - Looking at latency alone
  - Assessing precursor behaviors only
- Advantages
  - Most precise method of assessment
  - Gives clear conclusion about function of behavior
- Limitations
  - Complex
  - Requires high level of oversite
 - May expose individual to reinforcement conditions and evoke problem behavior

Condition	Discriminative Stimulus	Motivation	Consequence for Target Behavior	What it means
Attention	e.g., "You do this I'm going here"	Therapist ignores individual	Therapist attends to behavior specific to what identified in observations/interviews	Positive reinforcement (in the form of attention)
Demand	e.g., "You need to do this"	Difficult demand is presented	Break or removal from demands for behavior problem	Negative reinforcement (in the form of escape)
Alone	None	No stimulation	None	Automatic reinforcement
Play	"Here let's play"	Free access to attention, no demands, free access to toys	None	Control
Tangible	"You can't have this now"	Highly preferred item removed	Given item back	Positive reinforcement (in the form of access to tangibles)

Functional Analysis Conditions Protocol

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Demand	e.g., "You need to do this"	Difficult demand is presented	Break or removal from demands for behavior problem	Negative reinforcement (in the form of escape)
Alone	One	No stimulation		
Play				
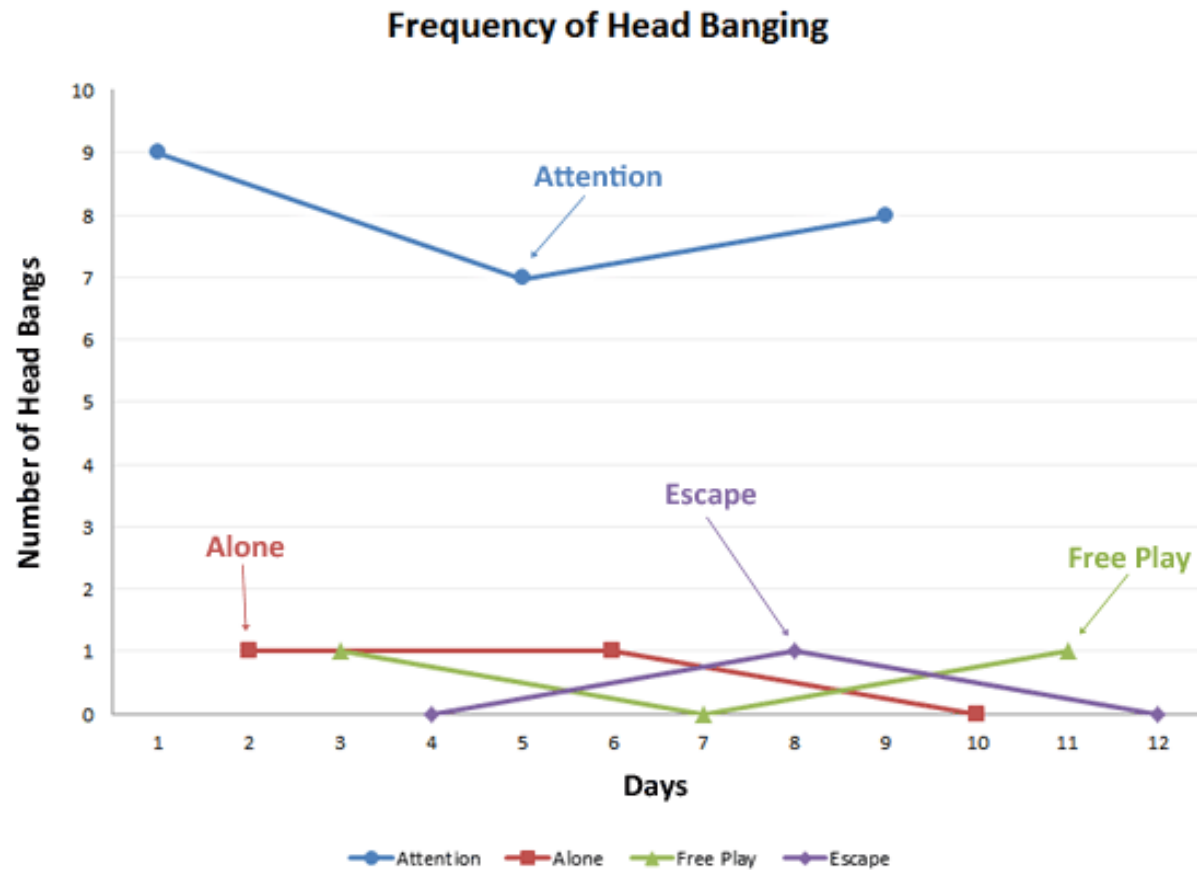
Example Data
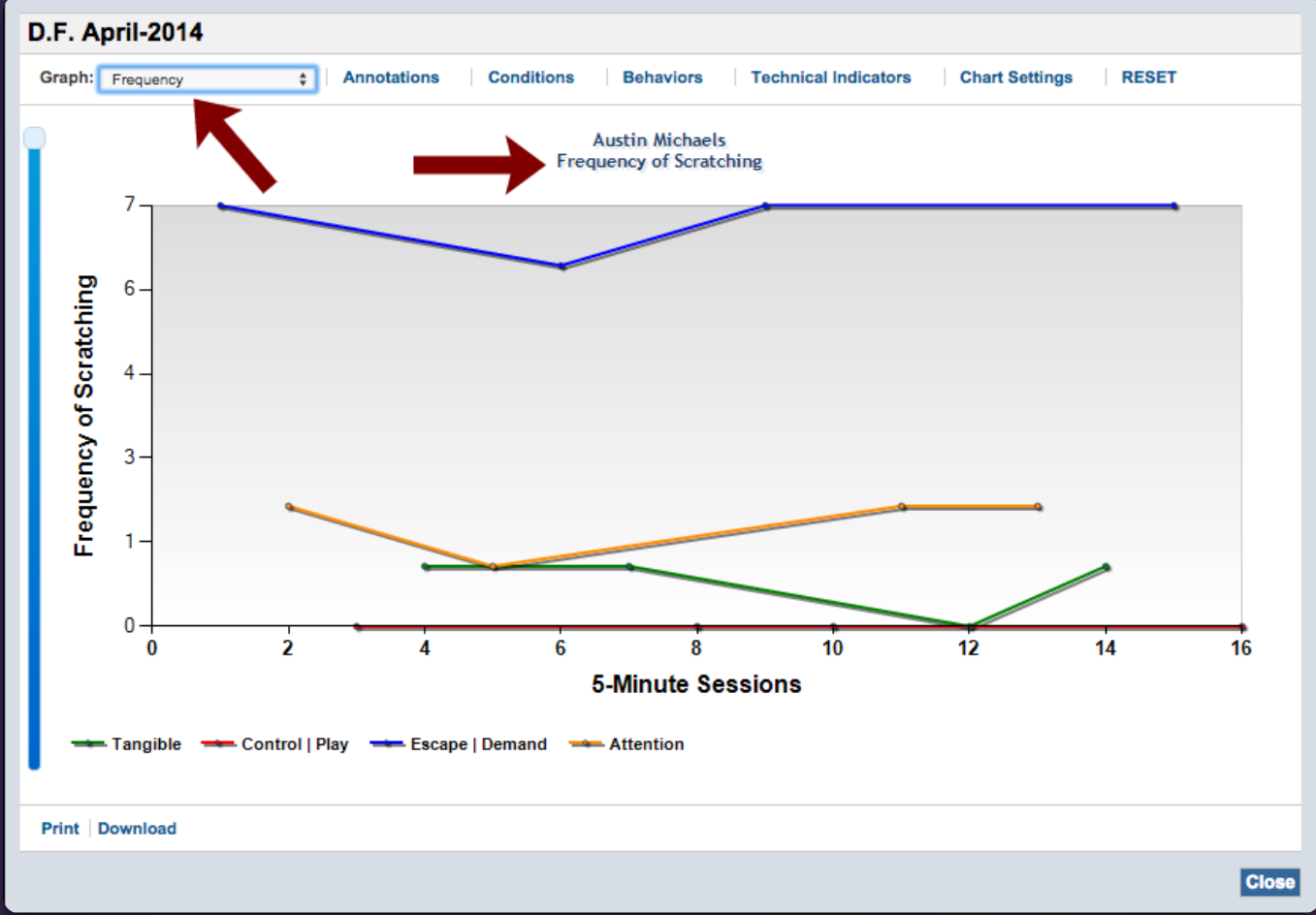
Example

Interview-Informed Synthesized Contingency Analysis

Open-ended interview

Observations

Analysis

Interview-informed Synthesized Contingency Analysis

| Single Test | Single Condition | Control | Analyze |

Open-Ended Functional Assessment Interview

Developed by Gregory P. Hanley, Ph.D., BCBA-D (Developed August, 2002; Revised: August, 2009)

Date of Interview: [　　　] Child/Client: [　　　] Interviewer: [　　　]

Respondent: [　　　] Respondent's relation to child/client: [　　　]

RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1. His/her date of birth: [　　] Age: [　] yrs [　] mo   Check one: Male [　] Female [　]

2. Describe his/her language abilities:

   [　　　　　　　　]

3. Describe his/her play skills and preferred toys or leisure activities:

   [　　　　　　　　]

4. What else does he/she prefer?

   [　　　　　　　　]

QUESTIONS TO INFORM THE DESIGN OF A FUNCTIONAL ANALYSIS

⇨ *To develop objective definitions of observable problem behaviors:*

5. What are the problem behaviors? What do they look like?

   [　　　　　　　　]

⇨ *To determine which problem behavior(s) will be targeted in the functional analysis:*

6. What is the single-most concerning problem behavior?

   [　　　　　　　　]

7. What are the top 3 most concerning problem behaviors? Are there other behaviors of concern?

   [　　　　　　　　]

⇒ *To determine the precautions required when conducting the functional analysis:*

8. Describe the range of intensities of the problem behaviors and the extent to which he/she or others may be hurt or injured from the problem behavior.

⇒ *To assist in identifying precursors to dangerous problem behaviors that may be targeted in the functional analysis instead of more dangerous problem behaviors:*

9. Do the different types of problem behavior tend to occur in bursts or clusters and/or does any type of problem behavior typically precede another type of problem behavior (e.g., yells preceding hits)?

⇒ *To determine the antecedent conditions that may be incorporated into the functional analysis test conditions:*

10. Under what conditions or situations are the problem behaviors most likely to occur?

11. Do the problem behaviors reliably occur during any particular activities?

12. What seems to trigger the problem behavior?

13. Does problem behavior occur when you break routines or interrupt activities? If so, describe.

14. Does the problem behavior occur when it appears that he/she won't get his/her way? If so, describe the

To determine the test condition(s) that should be conducted and the specific type(s) of consequences that may be incorporated into the test condition(s):
15. How do you and others react or respond to the problem behavior?

16. What do you and others do to calm him/her down once he/she engaged in the problem behavior?

17. What do you and others do to distract him/her from engaging in the problem behavior?

In addition to the above information, to assist in developing a hunch as to why problem behavior is occurring and to assist in determining the test condition(s) to be conducted:
18. What do you think he/she is trying to communicate with his/her problem behavior, if anything?

19. Do you think this problem behavior is a form of self stimulation? If so, what gives you that impression?

20. Why do you think he/she is engaging in the problem behavior?

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