Strategies for Supporting Positive Behaviors in Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder

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Think About It! Thoughts! and Apply It! Activities

MODULES 1 & 2

Participant Handbook

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This book is to be used as a companion to the Strategies for Supporting Positive Behaviors in Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder course. The activities are part of the course and will be discussed as you go through each of the presentations. The presentations will let you know which activity to use when it is time.

There are two types of activities: **Think About It!** and **Apply It!** Each activity will be marked by an icon and a specified color as you can see below:

**Think About It!**

The Think About It! activities are based on case studies, videos or other activities related to the content. They are designed for you to complete during the presentation. Each Think About It! activity should take approximately five minutes or less to complete as you view the presentation. It is recommended you stop the presentation briefly and complete the activity in this Handbook. Suggested answers to the Think About It! activities are supplied on the slide following the activity.

**Apply It!**

The Apply It! activities are more involved and are designed to help you apply the content with your own students. They provide an activity or directives which require you to use your own situation and apply the content directly. These activities are to be completed following the presentation when you have time to gather necessary information and complete the activity. Many of the Apply It! activities can be completed in this Handbook in the space provided while others may require you to complete work outside of the Handbook. If you complete the Apply It! activities in order as you complete the course, you will find your learning is enhanced and the course is more effective.

**As you go through this course and complete the Think About It! and Apply It! activities, you will be encouraged to share your responses on the Group Activity Board. These activities are excellent ways to foster communication and identify areas of need you may have as you support students with ASD.**

**We hope that you enjoy the course and the activities!**
As you complete the course, you will be following case studies of different students with ASD. Below you will find a description of the 4 case studies used throughout the course. The case studies will be used to provide examples of the course content and may also be used in the Think About It! activities.

**Meet Leo**
Leo is a fourth grader with ASD. Recently, Leo moved to a new school from out of state and is getting used to a new school, with new staff, new routines and new types of curriculum demands. Before he moved, Leo was an A/B student and had been provided with a 1:1 paraprofessional. Now that he’s moved, he no longer has access to a 1:1 paraprofessional and has been given a handful of visual supports to navigate his new environment. He has come a long way through the years moving from being primarily non-verbal to using language much like a student with Asperger’s Syndrome. Leo has been increasingly frustrated during class and has been yelling, throwing pencils, and shoving his chair around. Even though his verbal skills have improved dramatically over the years, he still struggles with communication, especially the use of social language. Recently, Leo has had tremendous difficulty getting along with peers during recess. While playing a game of kickball, he became frustrated with the rules and bit a fellow student on the arm. This is an example of an interfering behavior and Leo’s educational team must uncover the reason why Leo is yelling, throwing items, and bit another student before they can try and replace such behavior.

**Meet Piper**
Piper is a 7th grade student with ASD. She has tremendous difficulty with language and does not currently use an augmentative and alternative communication method. Lately, Piper has been engaging in interfering behavior. For what appears to be no reason, Piper becomes agitated and runs to the door of her self-contained classroom. This happens at various times of the day and when presented with a variety of assignments. Previously, Piper has used other types of interfering behavior, such as throwing materials, when presented with assignments that were too difficult. Since then, Piper’s teacher has broken down the assignments and adjusted the curriculum to meet Piper’s needs. However, now that Piper is suddenly running, the teacher wonders if the academic demands are too great. Piper’s teacher has also noted that Piper previously ran when confronted with various loud noises. Her teacher is very concerned and doesn’t know how to approach the situation.

**Meet Shane**
Shane is a high school student with ASD and is struggling in his math class. He is ignoring class activities, not following directions and frequently disrupts the class. He is easily embarrassed by attention and cannot handle being ‘put on the spot’ with questions. Other teachers, such as his language arts teacher, have seen these behaviors too. They have ignored him as they don’t have time to get into a power struggle with him. Recently, his regular math teacher
resigned and the school counselor has served as the substitute teacher for that class. Shane’s educational team hopes to create positive changes in Shane’s behavior before a new teacher arrives.

Meet Eric........Eric is a 4th grade student. He has recently moved. Eric has many capabilities and has above average grades. His teacher has referred him to the team to consider what to do. There have been some minor problems with Eric for quite some time. Eric has been making frequent noises in the classroom that are annoying and disruptive to the class learning time. After using the typical classroom management strategies, Eric’s teacher has not seen any change in behavior and has decided that she needs help.

Meet Jack ......Jack is a 3rd grade student with ASD. Jack can be intense and emotional. He often has trouble understanding facial expressions and body language. He has had several days in the last month where he cries out and bangs his head on his desk. Despite having excellent vocabulary, he cannot tell the teacher what is wrong. Jack has also been prone to switching all the lights off in his classroom. His teacher wonders if he has sensory processing problems and is bothered by the light. During these episodes, Jack refuses to do any work at all. Finally, after much concern, Jack’s parents took him to the doctor where he was diagnosed with migraines. Placed on a migraine preventative medication, Jack rarely deals with such outbursts and when he does, he goes to the nurse’s office and sits quietly in the dark until the pain passes. When Jack cried out and banged his head, he was saying, “I’m in pain!”

Meet Logan.....Logan is a high school student with ASD. Logan is a high school student with ASD and is now in an Algebra class. He is a good student but often has trouble with sequencing and following directions. The year before he had done quite well with Geometry and his teachers and parents had high hopes for his ability to do well in Algebra. However, within the first few weeks, Logan began biting the erasers off his pencils, sometimes eating them, and asking to use the restroom excessively, often spending so much time in there that another student would have to go and get him. After much discussion between staff and parents, it was determined that Logan needed help with the academic demands of the new Algebra class and modifications were made to his curriculum. When Logan started biting his erasers and spending so much time in the restroom, he was saying, “This is too hard! I don’t understand!”
Key Points

- A student’s behavior has meaning. Uncovering that meaning often requires thoughtful observation and a thorough understanding of the primary and secondary characteristics.

- Think of Positive Behavior Supports as the overall philosophy we will use to support the student with ASD. Positive Behavior Supports are just that, they are positive!

- PBS is an effective tool driven by respect, compassion and dignity. PBS is also person-centered and considers an individual’s hopes, dreams and quality of life.

- Positive Behavior Supports NEVER use pain, humiliation or deprive the student of basic human needs.

- Behaviors that are considered to be negative are called interfering behaviors. The behavior is considered negative because it ‘interferes’ with the person’s ability to participate in the environment around him.

- Because ASD is a complex disorder, sometimes it is easier to think of the core deficits as a triad of impairments that often overlap each other. The triad consists of communication, social and behavior and reflects the basis of the diagnostic evaluation.

- Every student with ASD struggles with communication in some way.

- When a student cannot tell you what they want or don’t want or even how they feel, they will rely on behavior as a means of communication.

- Most students with ASD will have trouble recognizing the meaning of various facial expressions or different types of body language. Understanding and using non-verbal communication will significantly impact the student’s ability to understand what others are thinking and doing.

- Because communication exchanges are between two or more partners, we have to consider the second part of the triad: social deficits.

- While the student with ASD may have common interests with another student, he may have difficulty figuring out how to start or maintain a relationship. On top of this, the student with ASD doesn’t understand all the ‘unwritten rules’ of the world.

- Another piece of the social puzzle is Theory of Mind. Theory of Mind states that people with ASD may have difficulty understanding that others have different perspectives, thoughts and emotions from their own.

- Theory of Mind deficits also makes it difficult for the student with ASD to understand another person’s motivation, deception, when they are teasing and when they are being sarcastic.

- As part of the social piece, a student with ASD will also have tremendous challenges recognizing emotions in others. Often, the student doesn’t know how to react to intense emotions in others such as sadness or anger. Additionally, the student doesn’t recognize and regulate their own emotional states. They do not have the appropriate strategies to handle their own emotional experiences and to demonstrate emotional regulation.
• The last section of the core deficit triad surrounds repetitive patterns, restricted interests and stereotypical behavior.

• Routines are a necessary part of life and provide a sense of predictability for all of us; however, the student with ASD often takes predictability to an extreme. They may require an excessive amount of routine in order to feel safe.

• The student with ASD often reacts quite severely to any change in their routine, both minor and major.

• Restricted interests make up another facet of the behavior component. These specialized interests can include almost anything and can include an interest in topics or objects. The student may have a single obsession that lasts a lifetime, or may have a series of obsessions moving from one to the other over the years.

• The last piece to the behavior core of ASD is stereotypical behavior. Given our increased understanding of ASD, these behaviors are now considered self-regulatory as they allow the student to regulate. In other words, they help the student to modulate emotion and sensory input.

• In order to understand the self-regulatory behavior we must consider the SEVEN senses: tactile, auditory, visual, olfactory, gustatory, proprioception and vestibular. A student with ASD may perceive sensory input differently and as a result may demonstrate many different behaviors.

• An individual with ASD may exhibit different behaviors at different times and for different reasons. Also, various students with ASD may use the same behavior but for different reasons. Never assume that what worked with one student will work with the next. Every behavior requires its own investigation.

• In addition to the core deficits of ASD, there are secondary characteristics that can affect a student’s day and play a part in our investigative processes, including executive dysfunction.

• Executive functioning involves all of those processes which help us to learn. Think of it this way: executive function is like the conductor of the brain. The conductor organizes, initiates, stops and manages all the other parts of the brain. Executive function helps us attend, plan, organize, self-monitor, problem solve and be flexible, all while controlling impulses throughout every single waking hour.

• While students with ASD face many challenges due to the primary and secondary deficits of the disorder, they also have a great many strengths.

• Supports for the student with ASD often play up to such strengths by using visual cues and prompts, maintaining classroom routines, and utilizing intense interests throughout the curriculum. Every student with ASD is unique, thus every strength will be unique as well!
Think About It!

IMPACT OF COMMUNICATION ON BEHAVIOR

1. Write down the receptive communication characteristics you observe.

2. Write down the expressive communication characteristics you observe.

3. Write down the impact the communication characteristics have on him.

4. Write down how you may misinterpret behavior if you do not understand his communication limitations.
IMPACT OF COMMUNICATION ON BEHAVIOR

1. Write down the receptive communication characteristics you observe.
   - The child does not look at the adult when speaking.
   - The child does not understand the questions being asked.

2. Write down the expressive communication characteristics you observe.
   - Uses only one or two words to respond.
   - Sometimes makes sounds instead of words.

3. Write down the impact the communication characteristics have on him.
   - He appears to not pay attention.
   - Sometimes he does not respond to the adult and other times he answers the wrong question.
   - He requires a lot of prompting and verbal instructions to do simple tasks such as throwing away a tissue.

4. Write down how you may misinterpret behavior if you do not understand his communication limitations.
   - It could appear that the child is ignoring the adult.
   - It could appear that he is being noncompliant.
STUDENTS WITH ASD

1. Identify 2-3 students with ASD who demonstrate interfering behavior with whom you work and write down their initials.

2. Identify and describe at least one interfering behavior each student demonstrates.

3. Describe why the behavior is considered to be “interfering”.

4. For each behavior, identify whether the behavior may be a result of a primary or secondary characteristic of ASD and if so, identify the characteristic that may result in the student demonstrating this specific interfering behavior.

5. List ways these characteristics have impacted the student. How has it impacted his or her learning? How has it impacted his or her ability to interact with peers?
Key Points

- Because of the complexities to behavior in the student with ASD, it's actually easier to put that fire out with detective work rather than our fire fighting skills! The Functional Behavior Assessment is the framework of our investigation and provides us with a model to assess and understand behavior in the student with ASD.

- When using a positive approach and investigating behavior, we first must understand when assessment and intervention is necessary. Not all behavior requires an investigation!

- Because the primary and secondary characteristics of ASD are so impactful, it stands to reason that this group of students will have more distracting and interfering behaviors than other students in the school. For example, limitations in communication, difficulties with understanding social rules, hyper- or hypo-sensitivity to sensory stimulation, challenges regulating emotions, and other characteristics all lead to increased interfering behaviors.

- Many times, simple changes in the environment and a proactive approach will help reduce interfering behaviors.

- The FBA is designed to identify specific information about the student and the behavior so an appropriate and individualized intervention can be developed and implemented effectively. Simply put, the FBA allows you to individually uncover the who, what, when, where and WHY of behavior in your classroom.

- In general, an FBA is an assessment process that is designed to predict the routine and events when a student’s interfering behavior occurs and hypothesize what the function of a behavior is and how the behavior pays off for the student.

- Determining when and how to intervene is as important as determining why the behavior is happening and what the behavior is communicating. By assessing the need for practical versus intensive interventions, we can manage our time and resources effectively. Not every behavior requires a comprehensive and intensive intervention.

- We use a tiered approach in supporting the student with ASD. The first tier is a universal approach that proactively addresses a student’s needs. The second tier is a practical approach and is used for students with mild to moderate interfering behaviors. The third tier is an intensive approach and is used for students with moderate to severe behavioral problems.

- Your role in an FBA is to be an investigator and collect information that convinces you of where, when and why a student’s behavior occurs. Whether you choose a practical or comprehensive approach, the where, when and why must always be investigated and defined!

- The best process to help you with the where, when and why of the FBA is a simple acronym—D.A.S.H. Define, Ask, See, and Hypothesize! This process takes you through the necessary steps of defining the behavior in observable and measurable terms, asks information about the behavior, sees or observes the behavior, and also develops a hypothesis about the behavior.
Think About It!

WHEN TO INTERVENE

Read each case study provided here. For each case study, answer the questions provided below.

**Student one:** Eric is a new student in his school. Eric has had recurrent behavior problems in his classroom. Eric has been making frequent noises. He will often make sounds with his mouth and will sometimes call out. Eric is capable of doing the academic work in all his classes and his abilities are average to above average. His grades are all A’s and B’s. When Eric makes noises or calls out, the teacher will typically stop what she is doing and will go to his desk and see what is going on. This results in the other students stopping their work and looking at the teacher and Eric.

**Student two:** Hayley frequently misunderstands social cues from both teaching staff and peers. There had been a minor incident previously where Hayley misunderstood the figurative language a peer used (Algebra makes me wanna puke!). Now when Hayley goes into the cafeteria she tries to get attention from her peers. She will do this by pretending to get sick and making guttural noises or by removing her food from her mouth. Hayley loves lunch and always finishes her food and will clean up her own belongings. Hayley confided to the speech and language pathologist that she didn’t know what to say to her peers and didn’t understand some of the phrases they used.

1. Does Eric’s behavior require an intervention?

2. Explain why Eric’s behavior does or does not require an intervention.

3. Does Hayley’s behavior require an intervention?

4. Explain why Hayley’s behavior does or does not require an intervention.
Thoughts!

**WHEN TO INTERVENE**

**Eric:** Eric's behavior definitely warrants intervention. While he is able to do his work and maintain good grades, his classmates are disrupted. Also, his behavior is taking a lot of the teacher’s time.

**Hayley:** Hayley’s behavior also deserves intervention. While she eats her lunch and cleans up, the behaviors she is exhibiting are socially stigmatizing. Her classmates may soon ignore her and refuse to eat lunch with her if they are not already doing so.
Think About It!

PRACTICAL OR INTENSIVE LEVEL OF INTERVENTION

Remember previously when we introduced Leo, Piper and Shane?

Let’s examine these case studies again.

Leo .......... Leo is a 4th grader with ASD. Recently, Leo moved to a new school from out of state and is getting used to a new school, with new staff, new routines and new types of curriculum demands. Before he moved, Leo was an A/B student and had been provided with a 1:1 paraprofessional. Now that he’s moved, he no longer has access to a 1:1 paraprofessional and has been given a handful of visual supports to navigate his new environment. He has come a long way through the years moving from being primarily non-verbal to using language much like a student with Asperger’s Syndrome. Leo has been increasingly frustrated during class and has been yelling, throwing pencils, and shoving his chair around. Even though his verbal skills have improved dramatically over the years, he still struggles with communication, especially the use of social language. Recently, Leo has had tremendous difficulty getting along with peers during recess. While playing a game of kickball, he became frustrated with the rules and bit a fellow student on the arm. This is an example of an interfering behavior and Leo’s educational team must uncover the reason why Leo is yelling, throwing items, and bit another student before they can try and replace such behavior.

Piper........ Piper is a 7th grade student with ASD. She has tremendous difficulty with language and does not currently use an augmentative and alternative communication method. Lately, her teachers have noticed an increase in Piper’s escape behaviors. Piper becomes agitated and runs to the door that leads to the hallway. She typically does not run out of the room, but just to the door. This happens at various times of the day and when presented with a variety of assignments. Her teacher is very concerned.

Shane....... Shane is a high school student with ASD and is struggling in his math class. He is ignoring class activities, not following directions and frequently disrupts the class. He is easily embarrassed by attention and cannot handle being ‘put on the spot’ with questions. Other teachers, such as his language arts teacher, have seen these behaviors too. They have ignored him as they don’t have time to get into a power struggle with him. Recently, his regular math teacher resigned and the school counselor has served as the substitute teacher for that class. Shane’s educational team hopes to create positive changes in Shane’s behavior before a new teacher arrives.
For this Think About It! activity answer the following questions:

1. Does the student require a practical or intensive level of intervention?
   
   **Leo:**
   
   **Piper:**
   
   **Shane:**

2. Explain your answer.

   **Leo:**
   
   **Piper:**
   
   **Shane:**
PRACTICAL OR INTENSIVE LEVEL OF INTERVENTION

Leo: Leo requires an intensive approach.

Piper: Piper may benefit from a practical approach.

Shane: Shane may benefit from an intensive approach.

Let’s discuss these three cases.

Leo .........Leo requires an intensive approach. He requires this level because he has behaviors that are severe, including throwing items and biting another student. Also, his behaviors are demonstrated in a variety of environments and a formal team approach would be best.

Piper.......Piper may benefit from a practical approach. Her behavior is not one that poses a safety issue. Additionally, it appears to be easy to understand. Piper seems to be running to the door and hallway to avoid work but we’ll need more information to understand what her behavior is communicating. The teacher can gather data about the behavior using a simple process. She can take what she knows about the behavior and develop an intervention plan without going through a lengthy and formal process.

Shane.....Shane’s situation is a tricky one; however, he may benefit from an intensive approach. His behaviors do not pose a threat or danger but are occurring in a number of environments and are intense in nature. If the team takes some time to gather data about the behavior and develop a comprehensive approach then they can likely determine the function of the behavior and develop a plan for intervention. Further, Shane does have a substitute in math who may not be familiar with behavior and will benefit from a coordinated team approach.
In this activity, you’ll need to go back to your first Apply It! activity from the last presentation. In that activity, you identified 2-3 students with whom you work who demonstrate interfering behavior. You also identified and described at least one interfering behavior for each student. Now, answer the following questions:

1. Re-examine the behaviors and determine whether you still consider these behaviors interfering or if you now think of them as merely distracting. List each behavior you identified previously and indicate whether you still consider it to be interfering.

2. If you determined the behavior is interfering and needs further assessment, for each behavior, indicate which type of FBA you would use: practical or intensive.

3. For each behavior, describe why you would choose a practical or intensive assessment process.
Before we can investigate where and when behavior occurs, we have to know what behavior to look for! The entire FBA process rests on our ability to clearly define the behavior.

As part of the D.A.S.H. process, we need to provide an operational definition. An operational definition will be one which provides a clear and objective definition that allows us to know when the behavior occurs.

First, the definitions of behaviors need to be observable. Observable means that the behavior is an action that can be seen or heard.

The definition of behavior needs to be measureable, and by measureable, we mean that we must be able to count or time the behavior.

The definition of the behavior should be so clearly defined that a person unfamiliar with the student could recognize the behavior without any doubts!

When defining behavior there are some tips that you can use to help you accurately and adequately define a behavior. The primary tip is to ask yourself: “What does the behavior look like?”

When you provide a definition of a behavior, you want to be sure you know exactly when the behavior starts and when it stops so everyone knows when it occurs.
DEFINING DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIORS

For this Think About It! activity, after watching the videos about Eric, provide a clear definition of Eric’s disruptive behavior.

Remember, be specific!

Definition: ________________________________

______________________________

______________________________

______________________________

______________________________

______________________________

______________________________

______________________________

______________________________
DEFINING DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIORS

- Here is what Eric’s teacher wrote about his behavior:
  - Eric hums, yawns, hits his pencil against his paper, and pounds on his desk.

- Were you as specific as Eric’s teacher?
OBSERVABLE AND MEASURABLE DEFINITIONS

1. Read the following descriptions and provide an observable & measurable definition for at least two of these behaviors:

   Jeff is in middle school. During Literature, he will go to his desk and will attend during group instruction. Once the teacher provides time for the students to work independently, Jeff will lean back in his chair and talk to the student behind him. If she ignores him, he will talk to the student on his right. Jeff will often laugh loudly and will pound on the desk as he laughs.

   - Jeff is disorderly in class.

   Observable and Measurable Definition: ____________________________
   ____________________________
   ____________________________

   Chris is in 5th grade. The teacher has noticed that Chris has not been doing his work when it is assigned. He will sit in his chair and will stare out the window. When she approached him and tells him to get started, he will say, “No!” and will lay his head down.

   - Chris is non-compliant.

   Observable and Measurable Definition: ____________________________
   ____________________________
   ____________________________

   Brandon will aggress towards the teacher or paraprofessional in the room. He will hit or try to hit them and will kick them in the leg. Sometimes, he will grab their shirt sleeve and will pull on it. He does this when the person is standing next to him or when they attempt to prompt him using a physical prompt.

   - Brandon is aggressive.

   Observable and Measurable Definition: ____________________________
   ____________________________
   ____________________________

MAKE SURE YOUR DEFINITIONS ARE OBSERVABLE & MEASURABLE!
OBSERVABLE AND MEASURABLE DEFINITIONS

You were provided very limited information about the students and their behaviors. However, here are some definitions that are observable and measurable.

- Jeff is **disorderly** in class – When given time to work independently; Jeff will talk to his peers sitting behind or beside him. He may laugh loudly and may pound the desk when talking. The behavior begins when Jeff begins talking to a peer when he does not have permission and ends when he has been quiet for 10 seconds or more. A non-example is when Jeff has been assigned to work in a group with his peers on an assignment.

- Chris is **non-compliant** – When given an assignment, Chris does not begin the assignment within 30 seconds of a direction being given. Chris may say “no” and may put his head on his desk. The behavior ends when he begins work on his assignment.

- Brandon is **aggressive** – Brandon will hit an adult, kick an adult, grab the adult’s clothing and pull it, or attempt to do any of these behaviors to an adult. A non-example is when Brandon taps the adult on the shoulder.
Apply It!

DEFINING BEHAVIOR

For this Apply It! activity, please complete the following:

1. Think back to that first Apply It! when you wrote down students’ initials and their interfering behaviors. Write down the student’s initials and the interfering behavior.

2. Provide an operational definition for each of the interfering behaviors you listed.

3. After you have written the definition, ask yourself, have I defined the behavior clearly enough? Is it observable? Is it measurable? Would a stranger recognize the behavior if they saw it? Do I know when the behavior begins and when it ends? If you answered “no” to any of these questions, rewrite the definition here.
Interfering behavior never occurs in isolation. There is always something that happens before and after a behavior. Also, behaviors occur in a very specific time and place.

A behavior chain considers the events that set up a behavior, the events that set off a behavior and the events that maintain a behavior.

A setting event is what sets up the behavior, or what happened before the behavior occurred. Because setting events happen over a longer period of time, these are known as slow triggers.

While the setting events happen much earlier than the actual behavior, there are also events that happen immediately before the behavior. Such events work to set off the behavior and are known as antecedents. Unlike the slower setting events, an antecedent acts quickly and is referred to as a fast trigger.

There are consequences to any behavior which maintain the behavior. There is always an ‘after’ aspect to a behavior, and these events are known as consequences. Consequences act as reinforcers or punishers to the behavior. For the student, this is the pay off to their behavior.

Anything that reinforces a behavior acts to increase the likelihood that the behavior will occur again.

Each piece of the behavior chain will work together to develop or impact interfering behavior.

When supporting a person with ASD, we must understand what happens after the behavior and what is reinforcing the behavior because consequences compete!
Think About It!

LEO AND THE BEHAVIOR CHAIN

Read the case study about Leo and answer the question provided.

Remember Leo? Leo is our 4th grader with ASD. Recently, Leo moved to a new school from out of state and is getting used to a new school, with new staff, new routines and new types of curriculum demands.

Leo is working on word problems in math class. Leo finds this really hard and gets upset during math. The teacher scolds him several times when he doesn’t write down an answer to a problem the class is working on together. When it is time for recess, Leo is thrilled and can’t wait to play with the new kickball the class just received. When the class gets to the playground Jackson, a classmate grabs the kickball and runs to the playground. Leo chases him and bites him on the arm. Jackson screams and drops the ball. Leo grabs the ball and runs far away to the end of the playground where he plays for 5 minutes before a teacher finds him and takes the ball away.

1. What is the interfering behavior?

2. What is the setting event?

3. What is the antecedent?

4. What is the consequence?

5. Is it likely this behavior will occur again in the future?
Thoughts!

LEO AND THE BEHAVIOR CHAIN

Let’s look at the answers to the questions about Leo.

1. **What is the interfering behavior?** The interfering behavior is Leo biting another student.

2. **What is the setting event?** There is a setting event or what is also considered a slow trigger in this scenario. The setting event is Leo struggling in math and being scolded by his teacher several times.

3. **What is the antecedent?** The antecedent or the fast trigger in this situation is the student (Jackson) taking the kickball.

4. **What is the consequence?** The consequence is Leo being provided 5 minutes to play with the kickball by himself.

5. **Is it likely this behavior will occur again in the future?** I think the behavior is likely to happen again. Leo received a positive consequence where he was allowed access to the kickball he wanted. Since biting the student “worked for him” then he may do it again in the future.
• When you ASK about the behavior, you are going to learn about WHEN and WHERE behavior occurs and apply everything you learned about antecedents, behaviors, and consequences. In order to understand WHY a behavior occurs, we must first ask key people about WHEN and WHERE behavior occurs.

• When doing the interview and asking about behavior, you will be gathering information about setting events, antecedents, behaviors, and consequences to learn more about WHERE and WHEN behavior occurs. This information from the interview can be used to identify interventions, but may also be used to guide observations you will do with the student.

• The first consideration with the interview is to determine who to interview. First, it is extremely important to interview those who know the student the best such as his or her parents, teachers, and paraprofessionals. Interview the person or people who have observed the behavior.

• Be sure that during the interview process that you interview the student if at all possible so that you can gain an understanding from the student perspective of the interfering behavior.

• The first step in the process is to always start with the student’s strengths when conducting an interview.

• The second step is to have the interviewee identify the student’s daily schedule.

• The third step is to quickly examine the daily schedule description. When you review this information you will identify the activities that have the highest ratings and then you will select the activities or routines that require further analysis in order to prioritize which activity you will begin with.

• The fourth step requires you to ask about the antecedents or what triggers the behavior.

• The fifth step directs you to ask about the consequences or what the response is to the behavior. It is essential that you know what happens immediately following the behavior.

• The sixth step of the process requires you to ask about possible setting events.

• After you have collected the information you will want to summarize the interview or interviews. You will take the information you received from your interviewees and prioritize it.
You will want to get the information you wrote down from your other Apply It! activities.

You should have identified and described at least one interfering behavior for several of your students.

In other activities, you further refined the definitions.

**For this Apply It! activity,**

1. Select one of the students and interfering behaviors from your list. Write down his or her initials here.

2. Select one person to interview. Ask the questions provided in this presentation and document your answers for each question. Write down the person you plan to interview here. (You may use the Functional Behavior Assessment Interview Questions to conduct and document the interview or may choose to use a different form.)

3. Once you have completed the interview, summarize the results. You can summarize the results here or do so on your interview form.
Observation of a student’s interfering behavior is crucial. Gathering data so we can learn about the behavior is the reason for our observations. By observing the student and taking data it allows us to develop a hypothesis and each step of the D.A.S.H. helps get us one step closer to developing our hypothesis.

The SEE section of the D.A.S.H. is very specific in that we want you to take data on the following: when the behavior occurs, how often or how much the behavior occurs, and the setting events, antecedents, and consequences.

Observation is not about opinion, it is about collecting facts, or data.

Frequency data is used for behaviors that can be counted. Frequency data tells you exactly how many times the behavior is performed by the student.

Because a behavior should have a beginning and an end, we need to examine duration data. Duration data tells us how long a behavior occurs or lasts from beginning to end. Duration data is helpful to use for behaviors that may not occur frequently, but last for a period of time.

You can use a scatter plot to collect frequency and duration data.

Another type of data you may want to collect is ABC data. ABC data looks closely at the Antecedent, Behavior, and Consequence of a student’s behavior. Taking this type of data helps us to take frequency or duration data but also helps us focus our attention to what is happening before and after the behavior.

The most important rule to collecting data is to be consistent!
FREQUENCY AND DURATION DATA

For each behavior listed, indicate whether you should take frequency or duration data:

- Justin hits himself in the head.

- Sandi gets distracted and stares out the window during group instruction.

- Alexis rocks back and forth in her chair frantically.

- Juan yells “No”.

- Ishaan climbs on top of the teacher’s desk.
FREQUENCY AND DURATION DATA

Let's consider the answers to the questions.

- Justin hits himself in the head – This would require frequency data.

- Sandi gets distracted and stares out the window during group instruction – This behavior would best be measured using duration data documenting the amount of time she spends staring out the window.

- Alexis rocks back and forth in her chair frantically – This behavior would also be measured effectively using duration data to measure how long she rocks.

- Juan yells “No” - This would require frequency data.

- Ishaan climbs on top of the teacher’s desk – This behavior would be measured most effectively using frequency data.
DATA COLLECTION

1. Think back to your last Apply It! activity when you conducted the interview. Write the initials of the student here.

2. Choose one interfering behavior this student demonstrates and create a data collection sheet. (You may use one of the data sheets provided or may make your own.) Write the operational definition of the behavior on which you plan to collect data here.

3. Collect data for at least one day.

Remember, make it simple and practical, there’s no need to start with complex forms! If you would like, you can use one of the data collection forms provided for you in this course. Before you start, make sure you know exactly what you'll be looking for by clearly defining the behavior. Make sure that the behavior you expect to see is concise enough to be counted, timed and measured.
The hypothesis statement allows you to pull all of our information together in order to develop a hypothesis statement which will tell us the what, when, where and why of the behavior.

Once we understand the function, or purpose, of behavior, we are then more likely to provide an intervention that works. If we do not fully understand why a behavior is occurring, then we will simply be guessing at what to do or use a cookie cutter approach.

The function of behavior can be boiled down one of two purposes: the student is either trying to obtain / get something OR the student is trying to escape / avoid something.

Generally, we find that the student is trying to obtain or get social attention, a tangible item or activity, or sensory input, or is trying to avoid or escape social attention, a tangible item or activity, or sensory input.

Whether the student is using behavior to get or avoid an item or issue, we must carefully consider the context of the situation in order to fully assess the function. As we work to determine the function we will use the acronym M.A.T.S. to help us remember the different functions a behavior can serve.

The M of M.A.T.S. stands for medical. When supporting a student with ASD, and there is interfering behavior, the first thing we should think about is whether the problem behavior is due to a medical need.

The next factor in M.A.T.S. is attention. The student with ASD may want or need attention, but doesn’t know how to get that attention effectively. Therefore, this student will display interfering behavior in order to obtain or get social attention.

The T in M.A.T.S. stands for tangible. Tangible is something you can touch and can be just about anything! This can include activities, toys, computers, food, drinks, books, assignments, and more. Often the student with ASD is trying to get access to a tangible item from their restrictive interests.

The S in M.A.T.S. stands for sensory. A student with ASD struggles with sensory input and may be craving various kinds of sensory input or avoiding it.

The hypothesis of function is based on all the information provided in the Functional Behavior Assessment.

Our hypothesis statement will put together the WHAT, WHEN, WHERE, and WHY of the behavior. Every step of the D.A.S.H. process has helped to answer these questions.

When (an antecedent) occurs, the student will engage in (interfering behavior) in order to pay-off / consequence, therefore, the function of the behavior is obtain / avoid.
FUNCTIONS OF BEHAVIOR

Take a few minutes and think about students with ASD with whom you work.

List an interfering behavior you have seen demonstrated that fits each of the following functions:

1. Access to a tangible item or activity.

2. Escape from a tangible item or activity.

3. Access to social attention.

4. Escape from social attention.

5. Access to sensory stimulation.

6. Escape from sensory stimulation.
Making a Hypothesis Statement

Now that you have the information to write a hypothesis statement, let’s practice with Eric. We’ve discussed Eric’s disruptive behavior throughout the entire D.A.S.H. process. Let’s review the information we’ve been provided thus far:

1. Eric is disruptive in class.

2. Eric hums, yawns, hits his pencil against his paper, and pounds on his desk.

3. During observation, it is determined that when the teacher works with another student (antecedent), Eric hums (behavior). The teacher then attends to Eric and answers his questions (consequence). When the teacher moves about the class (antecedent), Eric yawns (behavior), hits his pencil against his paper (behavior). The teacher attends to Eric helps him with the task (consequence). When the teacher is working at the board (antecedent), Eric then pounds on his desk (behavior). Then, the teacher attends to Eric and then grants his request (consequence).

4. Use the information to write the hypothesis statement.
MAKING A HYPOTHESIS STATEMENT

Let’s discuss the answer to this question.

The hypothesis statement should be:

During independent work times in the classroom and when the teacher is not attending directly to Eric, he engages in noisemaking which may include humming, yawning, hitting his pencil on paper and/or pounding his desk to obtain access to the teacher’s attention.
HYPOTHESIS STATEMENT

In the beginning of this course, you were asked to identify 2-3 students with ASD with whom you work who demonstrate interfering behavior. As you’ve gone through this course, you were asked to repeatedly come back to one of these students in order to determine whether the behavior was interfering, whether a practical or intensive FBA was more appropriate and then applied the steps of the D.A.S.H. by conducting an interview and collecting data.

Now it’s time to take all that information and create a hypothesis statement!

1. Identify the student that you’ve tracked throughout this course. Write his or her initials here.

2. Summarize each step of the D.A.S.H. process that you have completed for this student’s behavior. This should include:

   Define:

   Ask:

   See:

Now, consider all the information from each step and write the hypothesis statement using the standard sentence found earlier in this presentation.