Behavior Management Basics:

What should you do to manage behavior in session, how do you teach parents to manage behavior, and what should parents be doing?

The Importance of Warmth and Limits in Parenting and Therapy

Directions/Commands

- Statements vs. Questions “It’s time to come back for session.”
- Setting an agenda and having session ‘rules’: Clear expectations
- Choices when appropriate and acceptable “Do you want to practice coping or continue becoming an expert on child sexual abuse?”

Praise/Rewards

- Refocusing on positive behavior: “catch them being good”
- Genuine labeled praise for positive behavior
- Creativity in rewards: at home and in session

- Specifics about rewards: Provide as immediately as possible, related to child’s interests or control/ability to make a choice, parents and therapists have to hold up their end of the bargain
- Letting kids think they got a ‘deal’

Differential Attention: The Key

- Attention: what behavior do you want to see more of? “catching your child being good”
  - Don’t tip toe around positive bx
• Ignoring: what behavior do you want to decrease/get rid of?

• How do you ignore a behavior? Active Ignoring
  - Inadvertent reinforcement of (the dreaded) Staying in the Waiting Room, Tantrums, & Power Struggles

• What behaviors can you ignore?

• What behaviors can’t you ignore?

Consequences

• Natural/Logical Consequences
  - many natural consequences are not appropriate (e.g., “You need to look both ways before you cross the street.”)
  - logical consequences are very effective, because they are related to the behavior

• Privilege Removal: Creativity in thinking about privileges for different age groups; parent has to have ‘control’ of the privilege
  - Young kids
  - Adolescents

• How does privilege removal work?
  - Remove privileges 1 at a time; for a limited period of time (1 day, ½ a day, 1 weekend day); getting the privilege back is what changes the behavior
- Not punishment: changing behavior

• Parents often want punishment: So, how do you convince them of what they view as ‘getting off easy?’

  1. Combating wanting to remove everything

- You need something left for kids to lose: “What will you do if he hits his brother again, that same day?”
- What do kids do when they have all their prosocial/occupying activities removed? What is left to do?

  2. Combating limited periods of time

- “Can you stick to/make sure he doesn’t watch any TV for a month?”
- “If he watches TV during that period, what does that mean?”
- “Kids view a month as a lifetime…(relate to their experiences as a kid), so where’s the motivation to change behavior—I’ll never get to watch TV.”

  3. Why getting the privilege back changes behavior
- Child “No way are you taking my game boy again!” We don’t like to lose what we already have

• Time Out: Best for young children (2 – 7)

- T.O. essentials: a backup for refusal to stay in the time out chair; the child has to comply/complete the task after getting out of T.O.

- What are potential backups?

- What happens if kids won’t complete task/comply?

- Parents have to use active ignoring while child is in T.O.

• Work Chores: Good consequence, but parents need to have relative control of child’s behavior to use

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-work chores—purposeful tasks, time-limited (5-20 minutes); not usual chores

**Discipline vs. Teaching: Timing**

- Both discipline and teaching are important; however, when implementing discipline, NOT the time to teach

- Parents can teach after child has calmed down, or at a neutral time: PCIT example: We teach kids T.O. *before* noncompliance

**Avoiding Power Struggles**

- Broken Record: Repeating/sticking with the original command regardless of the child’s excuse “having your blinders on, not getting off track”

- Using Deflectors: Nevertheless, the rule is..., exit and wait,

- Using analogies: “They have a lasso…; “They are pushing your buttons…” “Don’t let them get your goat…; “They are throwing out that line, reeling you in….”
  - Having parents identify their buttons; button pushing handouts

- Reframing disrespect as “attitude” or button pushing
Teaching Behavior Management to Parents

- Teaching parents and kids expectations

- **Role Plays**
  - talking is NOT the same as doing: See them do it
  - Practice it over and over with increasingly difficult/noncompliant child behavior

- Home Visits: Seeing skills in action; logistical issues