Using FBA Data to Inform Treatment Planning for Students with Social, Emotional and Behavioral Needs

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Defensible Hypothesis Statement
Summarizing the Results of the FBA
3. Setting Events
Must be periodic,
Not continuous!
An event that
increases the
likelihood that the
trigger will provoke the
behavior

2. Triggering
Antecedents
The immediate
event that
provokes the
behavior

1. Problem
Behavior
The main
behavior of
concern that is
having a negative
impact

5. Desired
Alternative
In the presence of
the trigger, what we
want all students to
do

6. Typical
Consequence
What the typical
payoff is for
exhibiting the
desired behavior

4. Maintaining
Consequences
The reason why
the problem
behavior occurs
(i.e., function)

7. Acceptable
FERB
A functionally-
equivalent
replacement
behavior that is
socially acceptable

Key question:
Can the student go on the
upper pathway when faced
with the trigger?

Student will not go on the upper pathway under one of
two conditions:

(1) student lacks the pre-requisite skills necessary to regulate behavior in the face
of the trigger

(ACQUISITION DEFICIT)

OR

(2) student is not properly motivated to exhibit the desired behavior when
confronted with the trigger

(PERFORMANCE/MOTIVATIONAL DEFICIT)
What’s preventing the student from going on the upper pathway?

Analyze why the student isn’t going on the upper pathway

Acquisition Deficit (Can’t Do Problem)

Student needs to be taught lagging social, emotional regulation, or self-management skills to meet demands from the environment

Performance Deficit (Won’t Do Problem)

Students needs more proper motivational supports to use the behavior or skills he is fully capable of exhibiting

Definition/Description of Problem Behavior:
There is a strong emotional component when the student exhibits the main problem behavior of concern

Function of Problem Behavior:
Data indicate that the function of the problem behavior is clearly to avoid/escape an unwanted situation/experience of interaction

Functionally-Equivalent Replacement Behavior:
Teaching/reinforcing the FEBB is only a short-term fix and the student has an acquisition deficit (can’t do problem) which will prevent the student from being able to regulate self in the face of the trigger to go on the upper pathway (ideal desired behavior)

Evidence-Based CBT or Other Mental Health Intervention
“How to” of Writing Effective Behavior Intervention Plans

FBA, PATHWAY CHARTING, AND WRITING THE BIP

Steps to an Effective Behavior Intervention Plan

1. Conduct the functional behavior assessment
2. Pathway chart the information gleaned from the FBA
3. Using the pathway chart, construct a multi-component, evidence-based behavior intervention plan and consider alternative supports need to address student skill deficits
4. Implement the behavior intervention plan with fidelity
5. Track student progress in response to the plan
Conducting the FBA

Functional Behavioral Assessment: Defined/Purpose

- Is a systematic, evidence-based process for assessing the relationship between a behavior and the context in which that behavior occurs to uncover the underlying function of the behavior (i.e., tangible, escape, attention, automatic)

- Goal is to develop a **defensible hypothesis statement** that summarizes the link between the target problem behavior to antecedent events and the maintaining consequence in order to inform the **development of a multi-pronged behavior intervention plan**
Functional Behavioral Assessment: Defined/Purpose

- FBA is a **fact finding process** that consists of collecting data to identify:
  - (a) observable, measurable problem behaviors,
  - (b) the precursor events, contexts or routines associated with increasing the probability that a problem behavior will occur (setting events),
  - (c) the specific immediate antecedent events within a context or routine that reliably provoke or trigger the occurrence of problem behaviors, and
  - (d) the consequences that maintain the problem behavior

Functional Behavioral Assessment: Summary Statement(s)

- Functional behavioral assessments should result in one or more summary statements that define:
  - The problem behavior (or functional behavior class)
  - The most likely context or routine
  - The controlling antecedents (setting events/ routines)
  - The maintaining consequence (reinforcer)

- Given a context/routine:
  
  Setting → Antecedent → Problem → Maintaining Events  Stimulus  Behavior  Consequence
Functional Behavioral Assessment: Summary Statement(s)

- Given a context/routine:
  
  Setting → Antecedent → Problem → Maintaining
  Events   Stimulus   Behavior   Consequence
  
  Hard Task → Instruction→ Whine → Escape task
  
  Alone → Peers playing → Push/Swear → Attention

Types of FBA

- **Simple FBA**
  - Function of behavior is obvious; therefore, no need for elaborate assessment
    - Indirect methods alone will suffice
    - Still a good idea to observe the student

- **Full FBA**
  - Function of behavior is less obvious; therefore, need for more in-depth assessment
    - Combination of indirect and direct methods

- **Functional analysis**
  - Function of behavior is elusive and greater need to get function right to prevent harmful outcomes
    - Experimental analysis is necessary to uncover function and identify functionally-equivalent replacement behavior (FERB)
Functional Behavioral Assessment: The Methods

FBA Assessment Methods:
- **Indirect Methods** – removed from time and place of the occurrence of the behavior (higher inference)
  - Interviews, records, ratings, checklists
  - Greater inference
- **Direct Methods** - performed during the time and place when the behavior occurred (low inference)
  - Descriptive direct observations in natural settings
  - Less inference
- **Experimental Methods** - manipulate variables and assess their impact on behavior (causal relationship assessed)
  - Functional analysis in contrived analogue situations

Steps to Conducting an FBA

1. Conduct FBA **interviews** with people who are most familiar with the main problem behavior and can define it in behavioral terms
2. Administer **questionnaire** to cross validate findings from interviews
   - Develop initial hypothesis statement
3. Conduct confirmatory direct **observations**
4. Develop **hypothesis statement** linking antecedents, behavior, and maintaining consequences
5. If necessary, conduct experimental analysis of behavior
FBA Data Analysis – Global Measures

Global measures of impairment that include emotional functioning

- Children’s Global Assessment Scale (CGAS)
- Child Adolescent Functioning Assessment Scale (CAFAS)
- Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths (CANS)

FBA Data Analysis – Broadband and Narrowband Tools

- Behavior Assessment System for Children (BASC-3)
- Behavioral and Emotional Rating Scale (BERS-2)
- School Social Behaviors Scale (SSBS-2)
- Social Skills Improvement System (SSIS)
- Social Emotional Assets and Resiliency Scale (SEARS)
FBA Data Analysis – Self Anchored Data

- Measure intensity of current problem, confidence, motivation developed collaboratively by clinician and student

Example: Rate how much you worry on a scale from 1 to 5:

- 1 I worry so often that I can’t concentrate on anything else. I get stomach aches and headaches. I start to shake
- 3 I worry but I can manage
- 5 I don’t worry at all. I am not worried about a thing

FBA Data Analysis – Self Anchored Data

The distress thermometer – Subjective Units of Distress Scale (SUDS)

Try to get used to rating your distress, fear, anxiety or discomfort on a scale of 0-100. Imagine you have a ‘distress thermometer’ to measure your feelings according to the following scale. Notice how your level of distress and fear changes over time and in different situations.

- 100 Highest distress/fear/anxiety/discomfort that you have ever felt
- 90 Extremely anxious/distressed
- 80 Very anxious/distressed, can’t concentrate
- 70 Quite anxious/distressed, interfering with performance
- 60
- 50 Moderate anxiety/distress, uncomfortable but can continue to perform
- 40
- 30 Mild anxiety/distress, no interference with performance
- 20 Minimal anxiety/distress
- 10 Alert and awake, concentrating well
- 0 Totally relaxed

Not Angry

Most Angry
FBA Data Analysis – Abbreviated Rating Scales

FBA Data Analysis – Goal Attainment Scales

Goal Attainment Scaling (GAS) is a therapeutic method that refers to the development of a written follow-up guide between the client and the counselor used for monitoring client progress.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GAS 5-Point Rating Scale</th>
<th>Predicted Attainment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Score</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-2</td>
<td>Much less than expected outcome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-1</td>
<td>Less than expected outcome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>Expected outcome after intervention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+1</td>
<td>Greater than expected outcome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+2</td>
<td>Much greater than expected outcome</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Develop an Initial Hypothesis Statement

When Aaron is given an unfavorable academic instruction (A) he becomes defiant by saying “no,” walking away, or running out of the class (B) in order to escape or avoid engaging in an unwanted activity (C), and this is more likely to occur when he is agitated by a conflict in the morning (SE).

Pathway Chart

Key question: Can the student go on the upper pathway when faced with the trigger?

1. Problem Behavior
   Defiance: saying “No, walking away, or running out of the class

2. Triggering Antecedents
   Unfavorable instruction

3. Setting Events
   “Something” that causes him to be agitated before entering class

4. Maintaining Consequences
   Escape from doing an unwanted academic task

5. Desired Alternative

6. Typical Consequence

7. Acceptable FERB

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Develop an Initial Hypothesis Statement

When it comes to leaving for school in the morning (A), Betty tantrums by flailing on the ground, kicking and hitting at mom, and saying that she wants to die (B) to avoid going to school (C), and this is more likely to happen when she has poor sleep and is in a “bad mood” the night before (SE).

Pathway Chart

Key question: Can the student go on the upper pathway when faced with the trigger?

3. Setting Events Must be periodic, Not continuous!
   Poor sleep and bad mood the night before

2. Triggering Antecedents
   Getting ready to leave the house to go to school

1. Problem Behavior
   Tantrums: flailing, hitting and kicking, saying “I want to die”

5. Desired Alternative

4. Maintaining Consequences

6. Typical Consequence

7. Acceptable FERB

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