

Behavior Tips

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One of the best ways to avoid a behavior is to do things beforehand called “Antecedent Interventions”.

- Provide schedules. Many individuals work better and work longer if they can see what is going to happen next. You can also use schedule to show them when they can have access to things they want (e.g. unload dishwasher, wipe tables, get a snack).
 - o Consider adapting schedules for various learners. You can use pictures, photographs, or objects.
 - Object visual schedule:
<https://i.pinimg.com/originals/f9/d7/45/f9d745000cf566fa3b0aff9e560f7e1d.jpg>
 - Picture schedule: <http://www.myaspergerschild.com/2008/11/autism-schedules.html>
 - Examples and types of visual schedules:
<http://lessonpix.com/articles/9/33/Picture%20Schedule>
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- Offer choices. Research shows that when we offer choices, people are more likely to do what we ask. You can offer choices about how to do things (e.g. washing the table with a rag/spray or a wet paper towel), when to do things (e.g. “Do you want to shower before or after dinner?”), what to do (e.g. “Do you want practice the piano or the violin?”).
 - o Procedures for teaching choice making to lower functioning children/adults:
<http://www.perkinselearning.org/activity/making-choices>
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- Catch them being good. Many people will have inappropriate behaviors in order to get attention. For instance, a child may scream when his parents are busy so that they will stop what they are doing and look at him. The key to stop the “attention-seeking” behaviors is to give attention BEFORE the behavior starts and give it frequently.
- Physical Exercise. Physical exercise is shown to help children/adults behave better, especially if they are anxious or are required to pay attention for a long period of time. Letting children/adults move and exercise before these stress-inducing activities can help decrease behavior.
- Use visual strategies to help the client complete tasks independently and transition independently
 - o Visually present the steps needed to complete complex tasks
 - o Use a timer to indicate when she needs to stop a preferred activity
 - o Give 5-3-1 minute warnings (e.g. “In 5 minutes I will need you to set the table”, At 3 minute interval say, “In 3 minutes I will need you to...”).
 - o Use calendars, schedules and to do lists to indicate what she needs to complete before she can have access to items.
 - o Use visual schedules to help her see what she needs to complete during the day.

- Schedule preferred items that need to be shared with others (e.g. the TV is a shared commodity, use a schedule to indicate when it is his turn to pick what he wants to earn)
- Tips for Transitioning using Visuals: <https://www.iidc.indiana.edu/?pageId=399>
- Use “First,___ Then,_____”. This is when you visually show and verbally tell a child/adult what they have to do before they get what they want. For instance, if a child doesn’t want to eat vegetables you can say “First vegetables, then ice cream”.
 - More information about why “First,___ Then_____” works: <http://theautismhelper.com/first-actually-works/>
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- Find reinforcers: reinforcers are things that people like and will work for. For instance, money is valuable to most adults and so they will get up early in the morning in order to work for it. When you can find the reward that a child/adult will work for, you have a powerful tool on your hands.
 - Tips to finding effective reinforcers:
 - For children/adults who are nonverbal or aren’t able to choose, see what they gravitate to. If you left them alone in a room with a variety of activities/toys, what would they choose?
 - Change it up. Find a variety of things and switch them out. This will stop them from getting bored with items.
 - Only give the reward when the child/adult has done what you asked. If you give it to them beforehand, there is no reason for them to put effort into behaving in expected ways.
 - Giving effective praise: <https://bsci21.org/five-keys-to-positive-reinforcement/>
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Teach Replacement Behaviors

- Teaching replacement behaviors means you are teaching a child/adult to get what they want in an appropriate way. It is ok for a child/adult to want attention or want to find a way to leave an activity they don’t enjoy. It is our job to teach them the right way to get it. Below are some examples:
 - Teach how to appropriately request items/activities. This can include teaching them to verbalize “Toy, please” or pointing to a picture/object of an item they wanted.
 - Teach how to wait for an item/activity. Start small by only having the child/adult wait for a short amount of time (see how long they usually wait and add a minute or two). Consider using a timer to show them how long they have to wait. It is also helpful to show the child/adult what they can do while they wait. For instance, if your child wants a toy their sister is playing with tell them when they can have it, show them when they can have it and offer alternatives. “Your sister is playing with the piano, you need to wait 5 minutes (set a visual timer). While you wait you can play with legos or read a book”.

- Teach how to ask to leave. Instead of having a child/adult throw a tantrum to get out of something they don't want to do, teach them to request to leave. This can include, verbalizing "I need a break, please" to giving you a visual card with a symbol on it that represents a break.
 - Visuals that prompt how to request a break: <http://autismeducators.com/browse-worktasks/free/Autism-Calm-Body-Cards-AutismEducators>
 - Scheduling frequent breaks so the child/adult doesn't have to misbehave to get one: <http://theautismhelper.com/escape-behaviors-access-breaks/>
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- Teach how to engage in calming strategies. Teaching children/adults to calm themselves before their behavior escalates is key. The most effective calming strategies are ones that require physical effort (e.g. walking, doing push-ups, yoga, squeezing a stress ball). Deep breathing is also key to calming the brain down.
 - <https://i.pinimg.com/originals/bf/53/21/bf5321624d7b60adbb8c9da49bb0b095.jpg>
 - Breathing Strategies: <http://www.new-synapse.com/aps/wordpress/?p=1195>
 - Visual choices of ways to calm down: <https://i.pinimg.com/originals/06/46/ea/0646ea6be8124a248873b4a2a6bafbcc.jpg>
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- Tips
 - The key to teaching replacement behaviors is that the replacement behavior needs to be easy for the child/adult to do. In fact, it should be easier than the inappropriate behavior they are currently engaging in.
 - Try to prompt the replacement behavior before they start misbehaving.
 - Always praise them for using the replacement behavior.
 - Resource about why to teach replacement behaviors and why it works: <https://www.autismclassroomresources.com/functional-communication-training-why/>
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Responding to Inappropriate Behaviors

- The key to responding to inappropriate behaviors is to not bring too much attention to the behavior. Try to use a neutral voice tone, don't look directly at the child/adult and don't comment on the behavior.
- If you say anything to the child/adult, it is best to tell the child/adult what you want them to do instead of what you don't want them to do. For instance, if a child is hitting his brother instead of saying "Stop hitting your brother" say "Hands in your lap".
- Prompt a behavior that they can't do at the same time as the inappropriate behavior. For instance, it is difficult to hit someone if you are putting your hands in your lap. It is hard to scream if you are verbalizing "I want a break".