Understanding Behavior
Alaska

Goals

- Understanding of the basics of behavior and applied behavior analysis as an approach

- Understand of function

- Understand the power of your attention.

- Team will learn the difference between reinforcement and punishment

- I want you to LOVE behavior analysis!

What We Look At

- For behavior, we look at:
  - A person in an environment
  - Behavior that occurs frequently or consistently
- The goal of looking for these patterns is to:
  - Learn what the person is getting (or not getting)
  - Find better ways for the person to get (or escape) that something

We may not like the behavior, but…

Since it is maintained in the environment

it is useful for that person

What are the "Principles of Behavior?"

- What are consequences?
- Reinforcement Increases Behavior
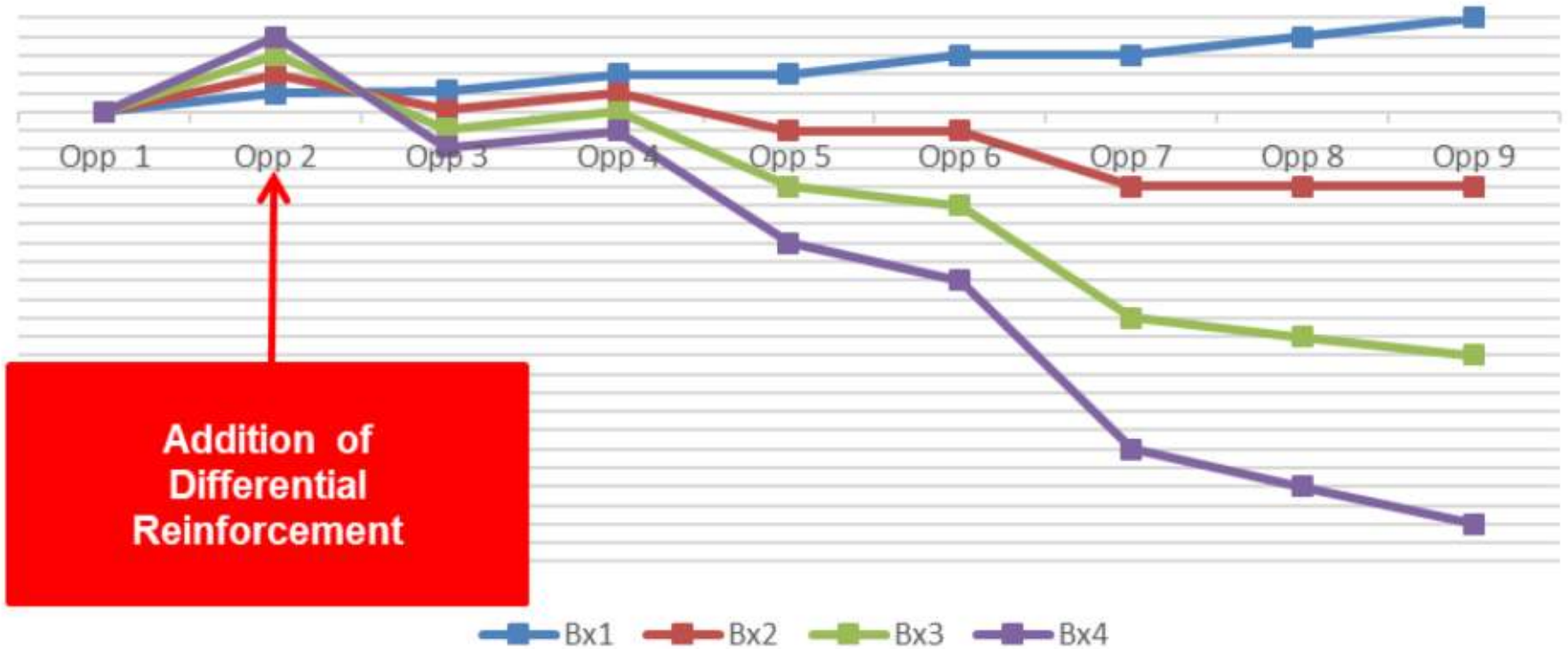- Punishment Decreases Behavior
- Pairing
- Extinction

Pairing

- Pavlov's dog
- Impacts your ability to reinforce
- Impacts your relationships (school teams, provider teams)
- I think of it like smell
- Make em' like you by telling them what they are doing right!
- Parents are in a different situation than others
  - You are likely well paired
  - Matching Law

Active Responding

- What does reinforcement do?

Reinforcement

Effects of Differential Reinforcement

Addition of Differential Reinforcement

Opp 1, Opp 2, Opp 3, Opp 4, Opp 5, Opp 6, Opp 7, Opp 8, Opp 9

Bx1, Bx2, Bx3, Bx4

Active Responding

- What effect does punishment have?

Punishment

Definition

- Happens after the behavior in question,
- Decreases the future frequency of the behavior
- That's it!

Why I don't like to use it

- Intent does not matter
- Can be mistaken and be reinforcing
- Does not teach anything except how to avoid the punisher
- Impacts the relationship

Positive Reinforcement

- **Positive Reinforcement ($R+$)**
- Something we do after a behavior we want to increase. Can be attention, praise, edibles, tangibles, etc.
- Effective with anyone because it can be given by anyone on the team
- Teaches new skills because the person will put forth effort for a reinforcer.
- You are paired with the reinforcement and become a conditioned reinforcer – the person will put forth effort for your attention and praise.
- Reinforcement is mistaken for a reward or bribe.

What is Functional?

- "What does the person get or avoid in their environment?"
  - The behavior is useful.
  - The behavior is likely to occur again.
  - The behavior is the product of a person's learning history.
    - Or... The behavior is the start of that person's learning history.
  - Could mean different things in different settings

Behavior Serves 2 Broad "Functions"

	Access	Escape
Socially Mediated	• Attention • Tangible (food, events, games, people)	• Undesirable attention, social interaction • Undesirable tangibles, food, events, games, people. • Unpleasant tasks, Demands
Direct* (Automatic)	• Tangibles • Warmth, air conditioning, sensory stimuli	• Unpleasant social interaction, unpleasant, tasks • Escape from loud sound, escape from bright sunlight

*Cipanni & Schock, 2011

4 Children Who Run Away

- One runs to get attention in the form of the chase
- One runs to go towards the playground
- One runs to get out of the classroom and away from the demands
- One runs simply because it feels good

Why Addressing Function is Important

- Function gives us a identified, observable, environmental relationship
- Leads directly to a strategy that we can implement
- With data collection we can see if it is working
- Let's look at the 4 children again

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Function: Attention

- Adults are a big reinforcer, for kids, providers for clients, supervisors for employees.

- If attention is driving the behavior we want to teach ways of getting attention that are good for everyone

Strategies

- Give lots of attention!
- We want to give attention for things that we like.
  - Give good quality, positive, attention with lots of eye contact, physical proximity and touch (pat on the back, high fives, etc.),
- We want to avoid giving attention for things we don't like (even if we really, REALLY don't like it)
- If you must pay attention to a behavior you'd like to ignore, but can't (e.g., due to safety concerns), give as little attention as possible (flat affect, minimal speaking, little eye contact, and be like a "robot")

Your attention is like money, spend it on the things that you want.

The Caregiver's Behavior

- ABA applies to our behavior as well.

- We can map out our behavior as caregivers.

- As caregivers we are challenged with dual responsibilities when dealing with challenging behavior:
  - Short-term management of behavior (How do I stop it now?)
  - Long-term trajectory of supporting the client (Where do we want the child to be in 2 years? Five years?)

Building Relationships

- The organism is never wrong!

- Seek understanding not blame!

- It is hard to control our own behavior, imagine how hard it is for our kids!

The Importance of Collecting Data

- Gathering information about the world around us is an important first step when making decisions about how to behave.
  - We check the temperature to decide what type of coat to wear,
  - We look at the number of vacation days we have earned before planning a trip.

If you think about it, these bits of information, or data, help guide us in our decisions every day. Why wouldn't we collect similar information in order to better support the individuals we work with?