

Behavior Modification

How to Change Negative Behaviors Quickly

Brook Bonnema, LPC, CCHP, Paralegal

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Objectives

- Provide insight into jail interventions
- Review what behavior modification is and how it can apply to the setting you work
- Understand why people behave the way they do (trauma)
- Learn what behavioral contracts are and how to create them
- Identify pitfalls and barriers

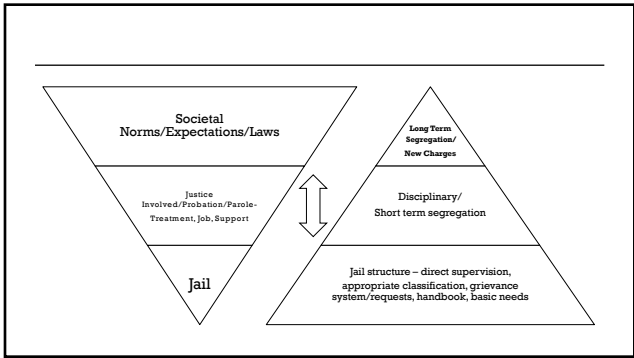
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Behaviorism

- Behaviorism, also known as behavioral psychology, is a theory of learning based on the idea that all behaviors are acquired through conditioning (Pavlov's dog). Conditioning occurs through interacting with the environment. Behaviorists believe that our responses to environmental stimuli shape our actions.
- Behavioral Psychology does not consider free will, moods, thoughts, or feelings. Additionally, there is no consideration for primal drives.

☆ So how do we consider these factors and use behaviorism to change a person's responses?

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- "Correctional systems possess and promote a fundamentally different philosophy and set of policies regarding management of behavior and tend to enforce compliance with institutional rules and codes of behavioral conduct through the contingent delivery of punishment to individuals who engage in specified behaviors that violate such rules and codes of conduct (Bardun et al. 2002)."
- Heavily focused on confinement as the sole means to address behaviors with no positive reinforcement for good behavior. (Is this true for parole/probation? Courts? Juvenile justice?)
- May be a lack of communication/education about why you are being punished or how to correct unwanted behavior
- Can these issues also apply to other areas?

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Considerations

- When should behavior modification techniques be implemented?
- Input from other staff is necessary in establishing which behaviors need modifying.

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Behaviors

- Violence, destruction of property (flooding), deviant behavior, manipulation, feigning or "crying wolf", staff manipulation, housing manipulation, and threats to self harm.
- To gain compliance (probation, being on time, diets, etc.)
- Globally – is it possible to influence or change behavior through single interactions?

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Why? ▪ Trauma

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Why do we do what we do?

- We are all striving to get our needs met
- Illogical behavior can arise from a multitude of causes
 - Primal Brain
 - Frontal Lobe
 - Personality Disorders
 - Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

Other considerations:
Language barriers, hearing impairment, cultural norms

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Primal Brain

- "When emotions are high, logic is low."
- Those who are in an escalated state are unable to consider consequences in the moment. ("Why on earth would he do that if he knows he will go to jail?")
- Behaviors, both good and bad, are learned. They are used to meet an immediate need.
- When a learned behavior achieves the desired outcome, when escalated, the primal brain will revert to the learned behavior.

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Primal brain/Frontal Lobe

- The primal brain is what controls our drives and basic needs. (Not surprising that many conflicts and negative behaviors result from not getting basic needs met – in jail and in the community.)
- The frontal lobe is responsible for anticipating outcomes...if I do this, this will happen. Not fully developed in men until age 25.
- Underdeveloped frontal lobes can result in poor behavior.

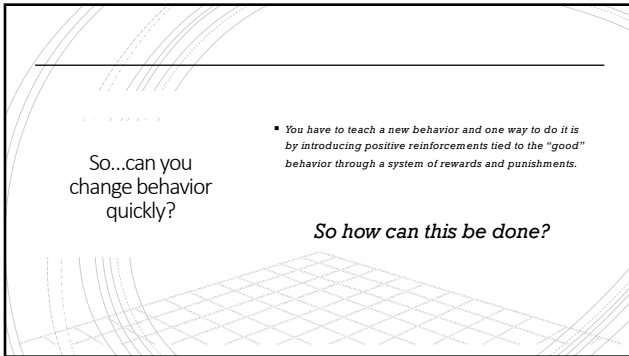
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Personality Disorders

- Anti-social – prevalence in jails is 65% male, 30% female (Globally, 4-7% male, >1% female)
- Borderline Personality Disorder
- Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

Regardless of the behavior and why it is operating, positive reinforcements can work to achieve a desired outcome.

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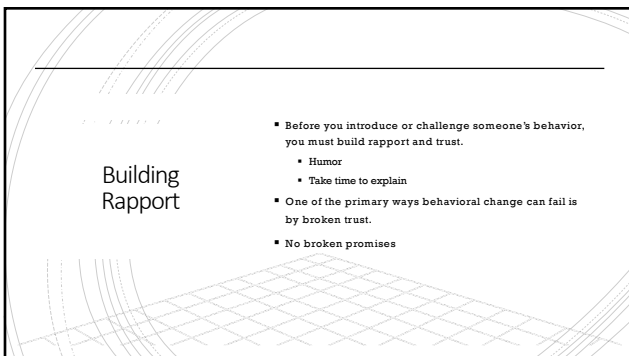


So...can you change behavior quickly?

You have to teach a new behavior and one way to do it is by introducing positive reinforcements tied to the "good" behavior through a system of rewards and punishments.

So how can this be done?

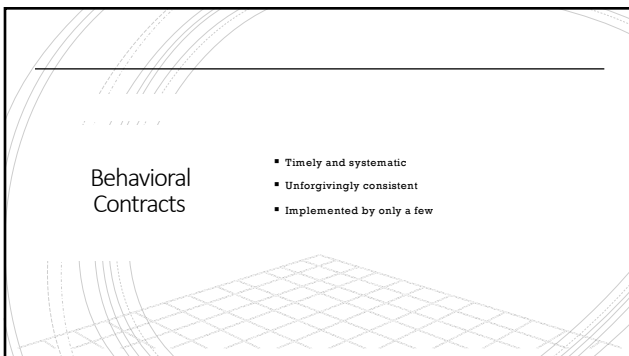
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Building Rapport

- Before you introduce or challenge someone's behavior, you must build rapport and trust.
 - Humor
 - Take time to explain
- One of the primary ways behavioral change can fail is by broken trust.
- No broken promises

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Behavioral Contracts

- Timely and systematic
- Unforgivingly consistent
- Implemented by only a few

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Case Example

- Day 1 – Receive and sign the behavioral plan
- Day 7 – No incidents/informational = Radio given
- Day 14 – No incidents/informational = keep radio and get a phone call
- Day 15 – Flooded/Chair/Violated rules – radio taken away and no phone calls for a week
- Day 22 (7 days after incident) – NO further incidents = give radio back
- Day 29 – No incidents = keep radio and get a call

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Contract Example

(Disciplinary Ends – 12/2/19 currently)

I, _____ will refrain from being written up further while in lockdown. I will not disrespect staff, cover my door, flood my cell, or any other disruptive behavior listed in the handbook.

Signature _____

_____ has remained incident free since I spoke with him about a behavioral plan on 8/26/19. This shows a good faith effort and his ability to remain incident free. In order to move back to general population, Mr. _____ would need to remain incident free and earn time taken off of his disciplinary sentence as well as removed from level status.

If _____ can remain incident free for two weeks, he gets stepped down to Level 2 status. If he remains incident free for another two weeks, he is stepped down to level 3 status. After a month of good behavior and successfully stepped to level 3 status, he will be moved to general population and monitored as a level three for a month.

If completely successful, Mr. _____ will return to general population on 10/31/19.

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Example with Counseling

Contract

I will refrain from any further incidences of destruction of property, threats towards staff, threats to myself, etc. for 6 days. I will start by moving back to bidg. 2 without incident. After 6 days, I will get at least one to two items back from my property (of my choice) in order to cope in single cell/disciplinary housing. After another period (determined by _____ security staff, and this writer) of "incident free" time, I will continue to get the remainder of my items back in my cell. After I have my things back without incident, alternate housing arrangements MAY be discussed with JMT staff.

Additionally, I will be offered weekly counseling sessions with the Counseling Interns. I will also be followed by the writer of this contract, Brook, to ensure consistency and clear communication among the parties involved. If I act in any way to harm myself, I will be moved to suicide precaution housing and this contract will be re-evaluated at that time. If I have another incident of violence, threats, destruction of property, this contract is void and items will be taken back by security staff. Counseling resources (intern meetings, check-ins, etc.) will NOT be taken away and will continue to be used as a means to cope and manage incidences as needed. Termination of counseling sessions will be determined based on treatment goals, not behavior.

Name _____
 Brook – BH Manager

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Example implemented by Corrections

Contract

I will refrain from any further incidences of destruction of property, threats towards staff, disrespect to staff, threats to myself, etc. for _____ days. After _____ days, I will get at least one to two items back from my property (of my choice) in order to cope in single cell/disciplinary housing or by the discretion of the building Sergeant. After another period (determined by the building Sergeant on a case by case basis) of "incident free" time, I will continue to get the remainder of my items back in my cell.

If I have another incident of violence, threats, destruction of property, this contract is void and items will be taken back by security staff. Staff will allow these you to have 1 toothbrush, 1 toothpaste, and one small bar of soap (unless on liquid soap restriction) to comply with jail standards. Other hygiene items such as lotion, deodorant, etc. will NOT be given to you until approved by the supervisor.

Counseling staff is available weekly to see you and can be involved in the behavioral contract as well to ensure compliance or answer questions.

Name _____

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Example

Starting Tuesday, 12/11/18, I will remain incident free. On Tuesday, 12/18/18, I will get a radio for remaining incident free. I will continue to remain incident free and obtain rewards as long as I have no write-ups. Counseling staff Allison will check in with me about my plan and I will also speak to counseling staff weekly while I am in lockdown. After another week of good behavior, I will get to call my grandmother, or person of my choosing. I understand that if I get a write up or incident report written, my radio will be taken and I will start over. I will have to behave for a week in order to get it back. After two weeks of good behavior, we will re-evaluate the reward for the following weeks.

Name _____

Brook
Behavioral Health Supervisor

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Example

2017

Handwritten notes:
 O = phone call
 ★ = JMT/possible level drop
 □ = 1 month off disciplinary time
 on 1/10/17 - if no incidents, 12 months charges are dropped [done]

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Intermittent Reinforcement

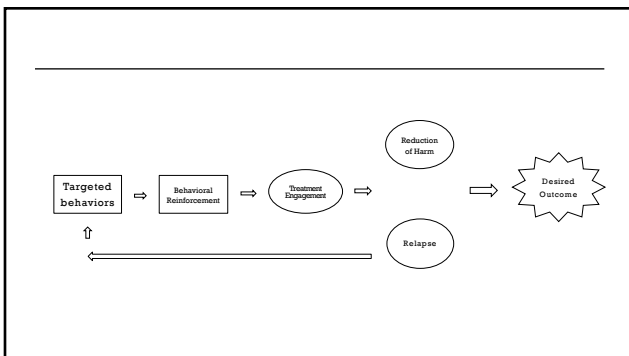
- Smaller rewards given incrementally until the final goal is achieved:
 - Phone calls
 - Books
 - Commissary
 - Radios
- Higher functioning – greater spacing between rewards
- Lower Functioning – daily reinforcement
 - Blocks
 - Recreation time

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Assigning productive activities – The dangers of boredom

- Creating an inmate or client with nothing to lose...

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Barriers

- Buy in
- Level of functioning
- Execution – too many cooks
- Rewarding bad behavior
- Too far between the rewards –
- Level of functioning/intellect

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Win/Win

- Reduction of harmful behavior towards the individual and staff
- Decreased liability
- Fiscally responsible

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How about you?

- If this can work in such extreme cases, how might this work in your practice?
 - Depression?
 - Smoking cessation?
 - Anxiety?
 - Any habit change
 - Tangible accountability between therapist and client

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Questions?

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TRAVIS COUNTY
SHERIFF'S OFFICE

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