

# Understanding Behavior



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# Purpose of Training

- 1. Review essentials of behavior.**
- 2. Discuss factors that influence behavior.**
- 3. Discuss intervention strategies for changing behavior.**



# What Influences Behavior?



# What Is Behavior?

- 💧 **Any action performed by an individual that can be directly observed.**
- 💧 **Why is observation so important? If it can be observed, it can be reliably measured.**
- 💧 **There are no maladaptive behaviors ... only desired and undesired behaviors.**
- 💧 **What are some Good & Bad examples of behavior?**



# How Does History Influence Behavior?

- 💧 **Our experiences are comprised of trial and error ...  
We are learning machines.**
- 💧 **Behavior that is consistently followed by a desired outcome becomes a part of our learned repertoire.**
- 💧 **Specific behaviors are more likely in the right conditions.**
- 💧 **Other behaviors are less likely in the wrong conditions.**

# How Do Motivators Influence Behavior?

- ◆ **A motivational condition changes the value of an outcome.**
- ◆ **When we have not eaten in 8 hours, we are hungry. Food becomes a very powerful outcome. Behavior that is likely to result in getting food is much more likely.**
- ◆ **If we have just eaten a big meal, then food is a very weak outcome. Behavior that is likely to result in getting food is very unlikely. Even if food is readily available.**
- ◆ **The presence of a reinforcer alone does not guarantee a desired behavior will occur.**



# How Does Setting Influence Behavior?

- ◆ **A setting refers to the broader environment that makes the availability of certain outcomes generally more likely.**
- ◆ **For example, arrival at a school indicates that demands for academic performance is more likely.**
- ◆ **Conversely, the availability for leisure activities, such as watching TV, is much less likely.**
- ◆ **Setting conditions set general parameters for the type or class of behavior that can be expected.** 

# How Do Triggers Influence Behavior?

- ◆ **Triggers are specific environmental stimuli that indicate a particular outcome is likely to occur or be available.**
- ◆ **Some triggers are cues that a desired outcome will be available.**
- ◆ **Some triggers are cues that a reinforcing outcome is not available, or that a punishing outcome is about to occur.**
- ◆ **Triggers for undesired behavior need to be identified, prevented, reduced in intensity or duration, or otherwise managed.**



# What Are the Functions of Behavior?

- ◆ **Function refers to the correlation between the occurrence of a specific behavior and the outcome.**
- ◆ **There are only 4 primary functions of behavior:**
  - 1. Reward or reinforcement.**
  - 2. Escape or avoidance.**
  - 3. Self stimulation.**
  - 4. Pain attenuation.**



# Examples

**Physical  
Aggression**

**Pica**

**Yelling**

**Self  
Injury**

**Verbal  
Threats**

# Example

1



# Example

2



# Example

3



# Example

4



# Example

5





# Closing Comments

- 1. Behavior is controlled by multiple conditions.**
- 2. Engineering the environment is important.**
- 3. Shaping staff behavior is usually required.**
- 4. Teaching replacement behaviors is critical.**

**End**