

**BEHAVIOR IS COMMUNICATION:  
ADDRESSING PROBLEM  
BEHAVIORS AS A GATEWAY TO  
SUCCESS**

# A LITTLE ABOUT ME...

- Former Special Education Teacher-Bachelors Degree in Special Education, Lee University
- Masters Degree in Applied Behavior Analysis, Columbia University
- Board Certified Behavior Analyst
- Worked in school, community, and home settings
- Ph.D. Student at University of South Florida, Special Education
- Graduate Assistant, Mentor Coordinator, U Matter program at USF

# OBJECTIVES

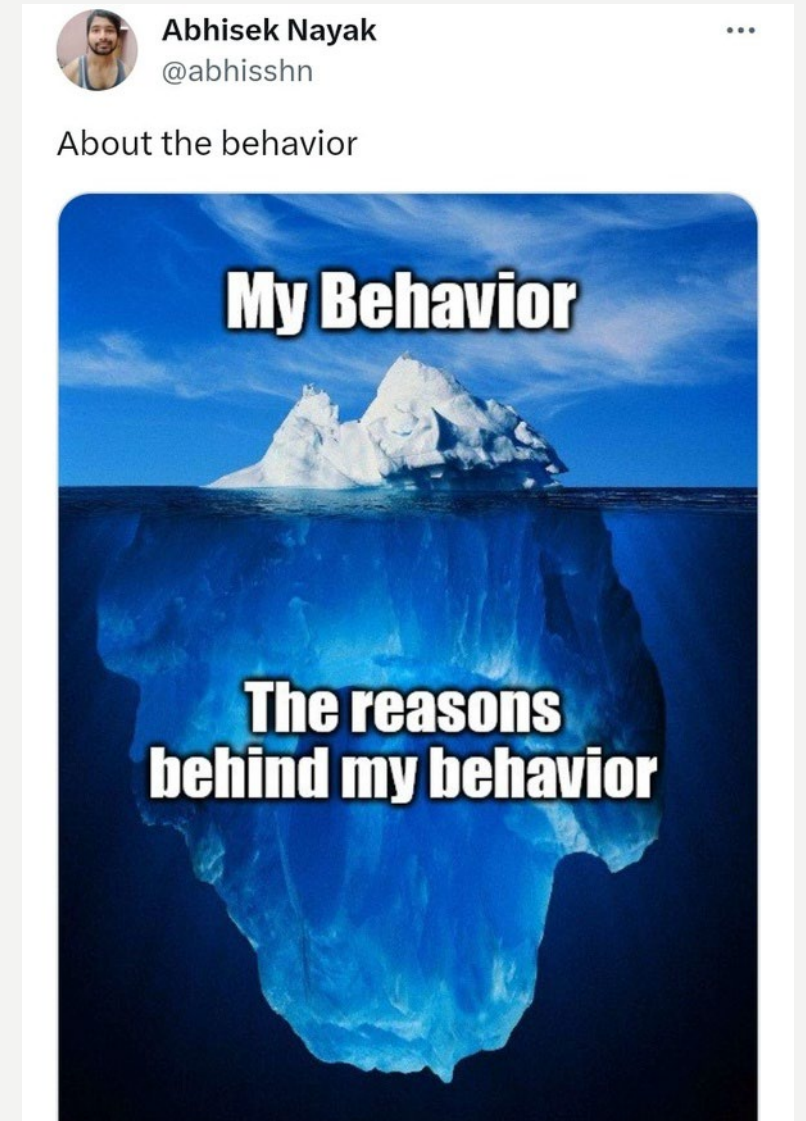
1. Participants will identify the functions of behavior and examples of these within their program and daily practice.
2. Participants will identify and describe strategies and interventions to implement for a variety of behaviors.
3. Participants will identify actions steps to implement within their programs, taking into account collaboration with other professionals.

# AGENDA

- "Behavior is communication"
- Functions of Behavior
- ABC's
- Interventions based on Function
- Strategies
- Other Considerations

# WHAT IS BEHAVIOR ANYWAY?

- Behavior is anything a person says or does
- Interactions with one's environment
- Overt
- Covert







# WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

- There's not a lot of research out there for this specific setting!
- Continued access to postsecondary education opportunities
- Increased independence and success
- “Appropriate support for students with IDD during college includes both individualized and natural supports” (Taub et al., 2017)
  - Improve access
  - Improve opportunities to learn

# BEHAVIOR ANALYSIS BASICS





- Socially significant behaviors
- Antecedent manipulations
- Positive reinforcement
- Behavior is learned
- Behavior can change
- Behavior happens for a reason
- “Private events” ARE behavior

# FUNCTIONS OF BEHAVIOR

<b>4 Functions of Behaviour</b>			
		What It Does For Me	When Does it Happen
<b>S</b> Sensory		Provides preferred sensory experiences; behaviour feels good to do	Anytime, even when alone. Especially if I'm anxious
<b>E</b> Escape		Removes undesired activities or interactions	When task is too: hard, easy, boring, or scary
<b>A</b> Attention		Provides access to people or interactions	When I want social interaction
<b>T</b> Tangibles		Provides preferred items or activities	When I want a preferred item or activity



# EXAMPLES

Four Functions of Behavior		
Function	Purpose	Examples
 <p><b>S</b> SENSORY</p>	Provides Pleasant Physical Stimulation	Rocking, Twirling Hair
 <p><b>E</b> ESCAPE</p>	Removes Unpleasant Or Undesired Experiences And Interactions	Leave The Classroom During Homework Time To Escape Challenging Work
 <p><b>A</b> ATTENTION</p>	Provides Access To Attention From Others	Throw A Temper Tantrum To Gain Attention
 <p><b>T</b> TANGIBLE</p>	Provides Access To Desired Items Or Activities	Throw A Temper Tantrum To Gain Attention

# THE ABC'S

## ANTECEDENT

WHAT EVENT OR ACTION OCCURRED IMMEDIATELY BEFORE THE BEHAVIOR?

## BEHAVIOR

WHAT DID THE STUDENT/CHILD DO?  
(SHOULD BE AN OBSERVABLE ACTION)

## CONSEQUENCE

WHAT ACTION OR RESPONSE IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWED THE BEHAVIOR?

Antecedent Strategies

**Prevention** Strategies; interventions put in place **prior** to the behavior of interest occurring

Replacement Behaviors

**Teaching** Strategies; A positive behavior that serves the **same function** as the behavior of interest

Consequence Strategies

**Response** Strategies; Interventions put in place to **avoid reinforcing** behaviors of interest and alternatively reinforce replacement behaviors

## USING THE FUNCTION TO DETERMINE INTERVENTION

The “why”, or function, drives the development of the intervention!

What prevention strategies could be put in place to decrease the probability of the behavior occurring?

What skills/behaviors need to be taught to replace the problem behavior?

What contingencies/consequences will be put into place?

# WHAT SKILLS NEED TO BE TAUGHT?

Target Behavior	Replacement Behavior
Talks out in Class	Learns to raise hand to appropriately gain attention
Yells at roommates when angry	Takes a break to self-regulate before speaking
Hits	Teach functional communication

# THINGS TO REMEMBER WHEN DEVELOPING BEHAVIORAL SUPPORTS

- Should be individualized
- Should be culturally conscious
- Look at environmental changes to make
- Positive
- Focus on social integration
- Allow choice and autonomy
- Emphasize learning

<https://www.aaid.org/news-policy/policy/position-statements/behavioral-supports#:~:text=Behavioral%20supports%20should%20be%20individually,%2C%20deprivation%2C%20seclusion%20and%20isolation.>

# STAFF TRAINING

- Who are the main stakeholders who support the student?
- Consistency in implementation
- This could include:
  - Mentors
  - Professors
  - Program staff
  - Other natural supports

# PEER MENTORS

- In this study...
  - 3 peer mentor-student pairs
  - Each peer mentor trained in a FBIP (Functional Behavior Intervention Plan)
  - Performance feedback given to check fidelity
    - Multiple coaching sessions necessary
  - All student problem behavior decreased, and prosocial behaviors increased
- Lansey, K. R., Antia, S. D., MacFarland, S. Z., & Umbreit, J. (2021). Training and Coaching. *Education and Training in Autism and Developmental Disabilities*, 56(3), 328-340.

# PEER MENTORS

- “Postsecondary Training and Performance Feedback: Effect on Peer Mentor Fidelity and Behavior of a Student with Multiple Disabilities” (Lansey et al., 2022)
- In this study...
  - Student was showing deficits in on task behavior
  - Peer mentor was trained in strategies to keep on task from behavior plan
  - Peer mentor was given performance feedback 3x following initial training
  - Results: Student behavior improved; Peer mentor became more effective in other areas
- Lansey, K., Antia, S., MacFarland, S., & Carr, C. (2022). Postsecondary Training and Performance Feedback: Effect on Peer Mentor Fidelity and Behavior of a Student with Multiple Disabilities. *Journal of Inclusive Postsecondary Education*, 4(1).



# TAKING DATA

- Operational Definitions
- Frequency, Duration, Time intervals
- This tells us if the intervention is working!
- Ways to collect data:
  - Microsoft/Google Forms
  - Self-Monitoring Data
  - Peer Mentors
  - Staff

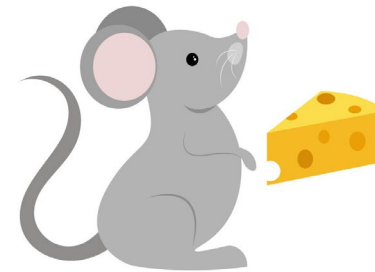
# STRATEGY EXAMPLES

- Antecedent Interventions: What changes can be made to the environment to prevent the behavior from happening?
- Examples:
  - Increase opportunities for choice
  - Integrate interests
  - Behavioral Momentum
  - Predictability

# REINFORCEMENT

- Natural privileges in the environment
- Group contingencies
- Responsibilities
- Work with families

## Operant Conditioning



Positive reinforcement  
introduced to increase  
a behavior

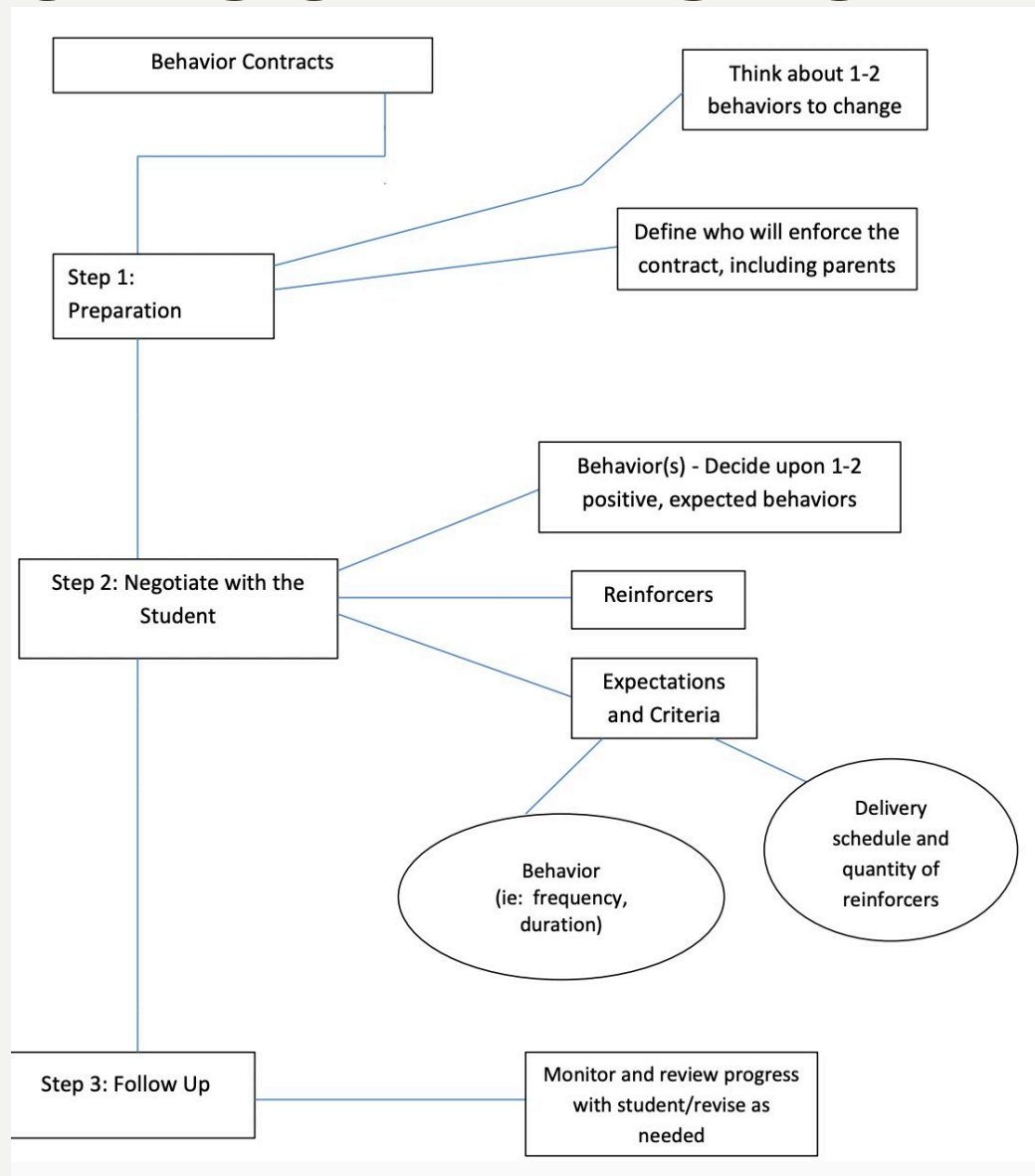


Negative reinforcement  
introduced to decrease  
a behavior

# STRATEGY EXAMPLES

- Behavior contracts: A [behavior contract](#) is a written agreement between two or more parties, typically an individual and a caregiver, teacher, or therapist. This contract outlines specific target behaviors, the consequences for engaging in those behaviors, and the reinforcement for meeting behavioral goals.

# BEHAVIOR CONTRACTS



# BEHAVIOR CONTRACTS

<b>Effective Behavior Contracts</b>	<b>Ineffective Behavior Contracts</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Negotiated agreement</li><li>• Describes what the student should do (i.e., what are the desired behaviors?)</li><li>• Provides a goal statement</li><li>• Outlines what the student will earn as a reinforcer for meeting goal</li><li>• Teacher uses contract to pre-correct and prompt behavior</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Non-negotiated</li><li>• Describes what the student is doing wrong</li><li>• Provides no goal statement</li><li>• Outlines how the student will be punished if challenging behavior continues</li><li>• No adult follow through with the contract</li></ul>

# Student Behavior Contract

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Dates of Contract: From \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_

The inappropriate behavior I will work on is: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

I will change my behavior by:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

The person I am going to practice controlling misbehavior with is:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

The reward I want to receive for controlling my behavior is: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

The penalty/consequence for using hurtful behavior is: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Print student's name: \_\_\_\_\_

Student's signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Print staff's name: \_\_\_\_\_

Staff's signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Follow up date to review: \_\_\_\_\_

# Behavior Agreement

**Student:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Teacher(s):** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Parent(s):** <insert parent(s) name here> \_\_\_\_\_  
**Date:** <Date> \_\_\_\_\_

has agreed to make an effort to modify his/her behavior. will self-assess and teacher will assess using a Performance Level rubric of four to one:

- Score 4** Outstanding effort with excellent success!

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- Score 3** Good effort and acceptable behavior. Yay!

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- Score 2** Some effort with limited success. Keep trying!

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- Score 1** Little or no effort during this period. Let's talk.

It takes a village to raise a child, and the names to the left represent the most important influences on behavior for our student. We agree to support specific behavioral expectations with:

- <edit for daily, weekly goals> communication
- Urgent alerts as needed
- Positive reinforcement
- Incentives
- Clear consequences
- Specific goals and goal reassessment

Behavior Goals	Student Assessment	Teacher Assessment	Notes (S or T)
Student will <insert comment from page 2>			
Student will <insert comment from page 2>			
Student will <insert comment from page 2>			
Student will <insert comment from page 2>			
Student will <insert comment from page 2>			

Based on the Performance Levels in the chart above for this reporting period, Behavior Goals do / do not need to be adjusted. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



## Internship Contract

### Student Name

An internship is an important part of learning how to be an employee. During the internship experience, you learn how to manage your schedule, arrive on time for your shifts, and other skills associated with being an employee. While you are at the \_\_\_\_\_, the expectation is to follow the USF Code of Conduct, because you are a USF student. But, also to follow the rules at the \_\_\_\_\_. The U Matter staff is here to support you in any way we can to help you achieve your goal of becoming a server.

Below are behaviors that need to change to the expected behavior, and steps you can take to achieve the behavior. This is to help you be successful on the job and in future internships.

Behaviors that need to change	Expected behavior	What steps can ____ do to achieve the behavior
Eating Condiments	Not to eat the condiments	Wearing gloves
Extended time in the bathroom		
Having conversations with myself aloud		

As a student of the U Matter program completing an internship, I, \_\_\_\_\_, agree not to:

Behavior	Student Signature	Date	Staff Signature
Eating condiments			
Have extended time in the bathroom			
Decrease having conversations with myself			

# SELF-MONITORING

- *the ability to monitor and regulate self-presentations, emotions, and behaviors in response to social environments and situations.*
- Key skill in self-determination!
- Using self-monitoring strategies can increase awareness
- Increase/decrease target behaviors

<b>Behaviors: How well did I...</b>	1 Date _/_/___	2 Date _/_/___	3 Date _/_/___	4 Date _/_/___	5 Date _/_/___
•	<input type="checkbox"/> Good <input type="checkbox"/> Fair <input type="checkbox"/> Poor	<input type="checkbox"/> Good <input type="checkbox"/> Fair <input type="checkbox"/> Poor	<input type="checkbox"/> Good <input type="checkbox"/> Fair <input type="checkbox"/> Poor	<input type="checkbox"/> Good <input type="checkbox"/> Fair <input type="checkbox"/> Poor	<input type="checkbox"/> Good <input type="checkbox"/> Fair <input type="checkbox"/> Poor
•	<input type="checkbox"/> Good <input type="checkbox"/> Fair <input type="checkbox"/> Poor	<input type="checkbox"/> Good <input type="checkbox"/> Fair <input type="checkbox"/> Poor	<input type="checkbox"/> Good <input type="checkbox"/> Fair <input type="checkbox"/> Poor	<input type="checkbox"/> Good <input type="checkbox"/> Fair <input type="checkbox"/> Poor	<input type="checkbox"/> Good <input type="checkbox"/> Fair <input type="checkbox"/> Poor
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•	<input type="checkbox"/> Good <input type="checkbox"/> Fair <input type="checkbox"/> Poor	<input type="checkbox"/> Good <input type="checkbox"/> Fair <input type="checkbox"/> Poor	<input type="checkbox"/> Good <input type="checkbox"/> Fair <input type="checkbox"/> Poor	<input type="checkbox"/> Good <input type="checkbox"/> Fair <input type="checkbox"/> Poor	<input type="checkbox"/> Good <input type="checkbox"/> Fair <input type="checkbox"/> Poor

**Behaviors: I engaged in these behaviors...**

	1 Date _/_/___	2 Date _/_/___	3 Date _/_/___	4 Date _/_/___	5 Date _/_/___
•	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
•	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
•	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
•	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
•	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

target behavior to measure:

- Choose a Schedule for Conducting the Frequency Count. Decide when you will use the frequency-count form to track the target behavior:

I plan to conduct the frequency count at the following time(s) and/or during the following activity(ies):

1	Tally Box: Write a mark ("I") in this box each time the target behavior occurs:	Total Behaviors for Session
Date: _/_/___		>

2	Tally Box: Write a mark ("I") in this box each time the target behavior occurs:	Total Behaviors for Session
Date: _/_/___		>

3	Tally Box: Write a mark ("I") in this box each time the target behavior occurs:	Total Behaviors for Session
Date: _/_/___		>

Tally Box: Write a mark ("I") in this box each time the target behavior occurs:	Total Behaviors for Session
	>

Tally Box: Write a mark ("I") in this box each time the target behavior occurs:	Total Behaviors for Session
	>

# SELF-REGULATION STRATEGIES

- Teach explicitly
  - Breathing techniques
  - Calming exercises
  - Sensory input
  - Taking breaks
- Model
- Incorporate regularly

# COLLABORATION-IT TAKES A VILLAGE

- What other services/providers on campus or in the community can you collaborate with (as appropriate and able)?
  - Mental Health Services (counseling, psychologists, etc.)
  - VR
  - ABA Providers
  - Medical Providers
  - Family Members
  - Mentors and Friends

# OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

- Integrate into person-centered planning process
- Instructional histories to consider
- Consistency is key

# REFERENCES

- Lansey, K. R., Antia, S. D., MacFarland, S. Z., & Umbreit, J. (2021). Training and Coaching. *Education and Training in Autism and Developmental Disabilities, 56*(3), 328-340.
- Lansey, K., Antia, S., MacFarland, S., & Carr, C. (2022). Postsecondary Training and Performance Feedback: Effect on Peer Mentor Fidelity and Behavior of a Student with Multiple Disabilities. *Journal of Inclusive Postsecondary Education, 4*(1).
- Taub, D.A., McCord, J.A., & Ryndak, D. L. (2017). Opportunities to learn for students with extensive support needs: A context of research-supported practices for all in general education classes. *The Journal of Special Education, 51*(3), 127-137.

# QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS?

- Feel free to reach out! I'm happy to share a PDF of this presentation and other resources.
  - [emilor@usf.edu](mailto:emilor@usf.edu)