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Preparing for an FBA Meeting What Should I Bring?

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When a student's behavior continues to interfere with his or her learning or the learning of others, despite typical school or classroom management strategies, referral for functional behavior assessment (FBA) is warranted. The role of the FBA team is to assess the student and to then use that information to develop an effective intervention plan.

> **Effective and efficient FBA and behavior intervention planning are best conducted by persons who have a history of interaction or degree of familiarity with the student.**

Functional Behavior Assessment is a process by which persons who are familiar with the student discuss their observations as a means of assessing the relationship between behavior and its surrounding environment. This information then is used to develop an individualized and functional intervention plan. Because they are often unfamiliar with FBA, many teachers may be uncertain about their role in the process and wonder what they can contribute or why they should attend. Simply by fact of having multiple experiences with the student, the teacher possesses the most important information necessary to complete the FBA. However, when teachers are unaware of the information that is helpful, the team spends much of their meeting time fishing for information through a laborious question and answer session with the teacher and other naïve members. To make FBA meetings maximally efficient, those invited should be prompted so that they are prepared to offer the information necessary to complete the FBA in the quickest and most effective manner possible.

> **The FBA meeting will be more efficient if the main questions and tasks have been considered in advance so that those attending may quickly and effectively provide key information to the team.**

To be effective, prompts need to be provided to faculty prior to the organization of the meeting. One efficient method of facilitating readiness for FBA meetings is to develop a school-wide set of prompts that can be applied to problem behaviors both as a pre-referral process and as a set of questions to be considered prior to attending the meeting.

ERASE

Problem Behavior

Explain-
- What is the problem?

Reason-
- What is he/she getting out of it or getting away from?

Appropriate-
- What do you want him/her to do instead?

Support-
- How can you help?

Evaluate-
- How will you know if it works?

An example of this type of standardized school-wide process is the “ERASE” prompt. **ERASE** is an acronym for **E**xplain, **R**eason, **A**ppropriate, **S**upport, and **E**valuate: all prompts for the generic questions that must be answered during the meeting. When all faculty are aware of these questions and have fully considered each prior to attending the meeting, the process can be more collaborative, efficient, and effective in terms of developing an intervention plan that is designed to facilitate student success. After presenting to staff and providing a sufficient explanation of the process, the **ERASE** prompt sheet in the form seen here may be duplicated and distributed to every teacher. In some schools, the prompt sheet has been formatted and printed as bookmarks that are distributed to the entire faculty. As part of a school-wide agreement, staff use these questions as the basis for dealing with problem behaviors in all students – both in the classroom and as part of an FBA team.

School-wide prompts provide a generic set of questions to be considered by the referring teacher and others on the FBA team prior to attending the meeting.

Following is a description of each of the generic questions with details of the types of information and decisions that must be considered.

Explain - What is the problem?

NEEDS:

- Create an operational definition of behavior
- Describe why is it a problem
- Determine whether he/she engage can in appropriate behavior
- List what have you already tried?

An operational definition of behavior begins with a description of its topography – what exactly does the behavior look like?

Dimensions such as frequency, duration, and intensity will also be necessary. For example, the behavior “talks out” may not, by itself, be seen as a major issue for many teachers. However, if it were known that the behavior occurred 40-50 times per hour, for durations of over 3 hours per episode, or loud enough to be clearly heard from a distance of 200 feet, it is much more likely that the behavior would be treated as a priority issue. This also would help to define why the behavior is considered a problem.

Teachers also should be prepared to present evidence of the types of past intervention strategies used, how those strategies were applied, and the outcomes of those strategies.

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Reason - What is he/she getting out of it or getting away from?

NEEDS:

- **Determine what times, locations, contexts, conditions, etc. tend to predict or precede:**
  1. problem behavior
  2. appropriate behavior
- **Determinie what types of events tend to follow behavior?**
  1. peers, instruction, consequences, etc.
  2. after problem behavior
  3. after appropriate behavior
- **Make a guess at the function – why do you think he/she is doing this?**
  1. access to . . . (persons, objects, attention, etc.)
  2. escape or avoid . . . (persons, activities, attention, etc.)

This information may be compiled by considering past interactions with the student. The more times a person has interacted with the student, the better information they will be able to provide. When memories alone aren't sufficient, any available school or classroom data (e.g., office referrals, incident reports, etc.) may be helpful in answering the questions.

Remember when considering the antecedents and consequences that the environment consists of all actions, items, and events. The teacher, peers, tasks, instruction, and other subtle conditions are part of the environment and must be considered.

Appropriate - What do you want him/her to do instead?

NEEDS:

- **Determine what times, locations, contexts, conditions, etc. tend to predict or precede:**
  1. fair pair – incompatible with problem (can't do at same time)
  2. functional – meets the same function as problem behavior

Replacement behaviors are best determined by persons familiar with the environment. The first step in determining an appropriate replacement is to ask, "what do successful students do under these conditions?" This provides an example of a relevant behavior in that environment. When we select behaviors that suit us but are not relevant to the student it is unlikely that the student will use that behavior as a replacement. Similarly, the replacement we choose must be acceptable to us but also must work for the student in terms of meeting his/her needs (i.e., function). Selecting effective replacement behaviors requires consideration of each of these issues.

Support - How can you help this happen more often?

NEEDS:

- **Determine how the replacement behavior and intervention plan will be taught**
    1. Rules (what it is and -- when, where, how, and why to use behavior)
    2. Examples (modeling and use of naturally occurring examples)
    3. Practice (opportunities to practice with teacher feedback)
- **Consider realistic routines and physical arrangements that could be implemented to facilitate student success (avoid predictable failure and create success opportunities)**
    1. prompts and reminders
    2. supervise
    3. avoid spoilers
- **Determine appropriate consequences for replacement and problem behaviors – and consider what is realistic for you to do**
    1. reinforcement (matches function)
    2. correction (how might this happen?)
    3. negative consequences (matches function)
    4. natural (try to keep it as realistic as possible)

Replacement behaviors must be taught to the student and then teachers must arrange environments to create success opportunities for students – following that up with reinforcement to maintain the behavior. Negative consequences for negative behavior also need to be considered. All strategies considered here must involve thought of what is realistic for school personnel to implement in a consistent manner.

Evaluate - How will you know if it works?

NEEDS:

- **Consider realistic strategies for measuring behavior**
    1. keep it simple
    2. consider times and conditions where measurement would be particularly meaningful and realistic
- **Consider what your measure will look like when the behavior is no longer a problem**
    1. measurable behavior
    2. by what time should this happen?

CONSIDERATIONS FOR DEVELOPING A MEASUREMENT PLAN

1. Determine what questions you want to answer by asking what information is logically important in our efforts to create students success.
2. Determine what data are necessary (i.e., what needs to be collected) to answer questions.
3. Determine the simplest way to get data by considering what is realistic in terms of time and effort for the persons being asked to implement.
4. Put the system in place so that all use in a consistent manner to collect information.
5. Analyze information gathered to answer questions, evaluate strategies, and drive policy and practice.

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