

linking research to real life.

## Understanding and Addressing Challenging Behaviors of Individuals with Complex Needs

### Webinar Series: Part Two

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A division of the ESC of Central Ohio

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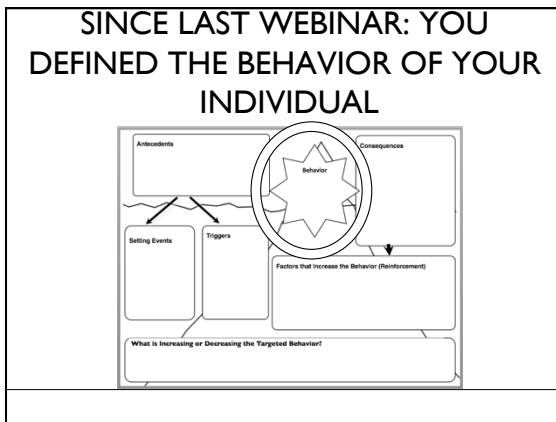
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**Antecedents**

- Occurs BEFORE the behavior
- Can be immediately prior to the observed behavior or can occur after a period of time
- Has an influence on the occurrence of the behavior

**Behavior**  
*Observable  
Measureable  
Understandable*

**Consequences**

- Occurs after the behavior and in response to the behavior
- Has a relationship to the behavior
- Either increases or decreases the chances that the behavior will occur (depending on the type of consequence)

**Important Vocabulary!**

- Antecedents:** Before the Behavior, Influences Behavior
- Behavior:** Observable, Measureable Action
- Consequences:** After the Behavior, In response

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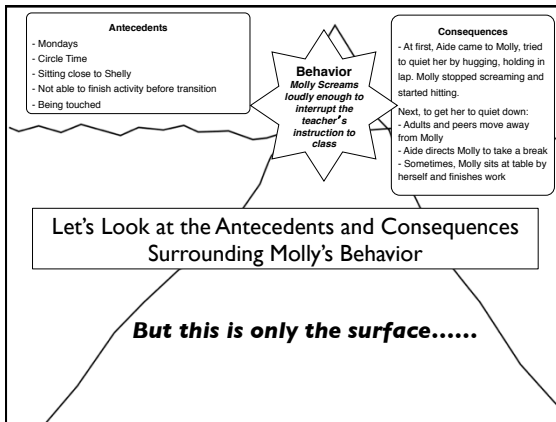
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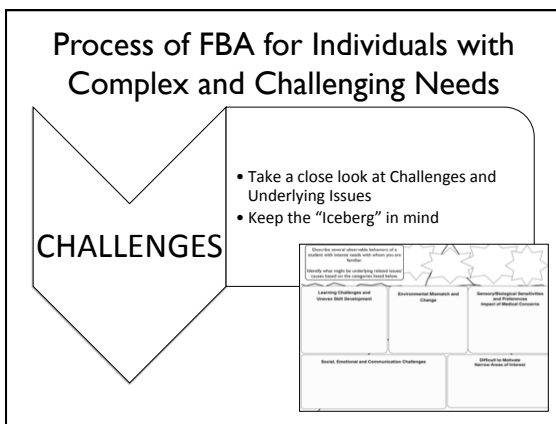
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### Challenges and Challenging Behaviors

Individuals with the most challenging behaviors often face many personal challenges in the the daily routines of life:

- *Communicating and Understanding*
- *Tolerating the Environment/Sensory Sensitivities*
- *Medical and Health Issues*
- *Being Social and Understanding the Social Climate*
- *Academics and Instructional Pace*
- *Remaining Interested, Engaged and Motivated*

**What is the connection between their personal challenges and the behaviors that we observe?**

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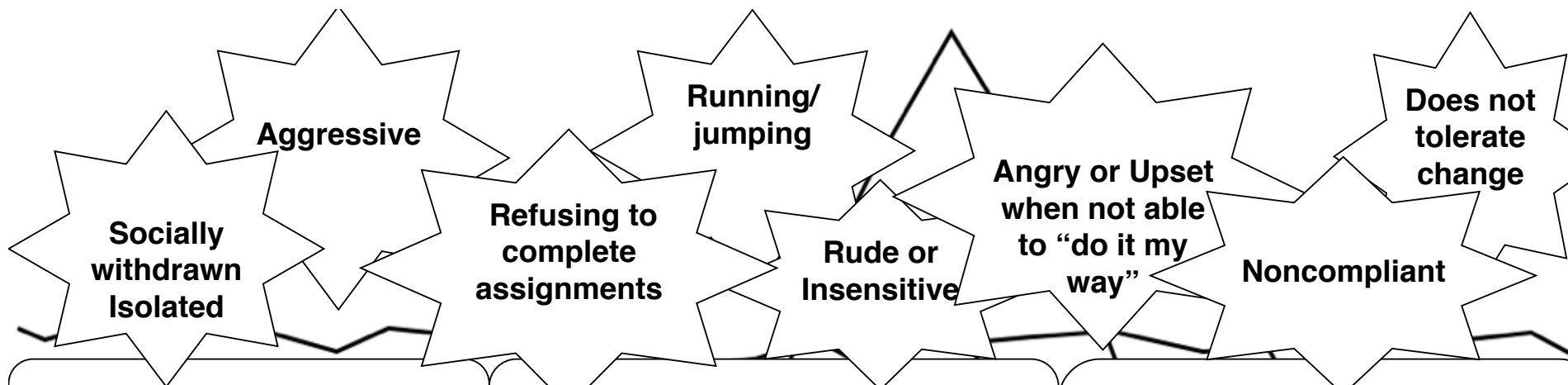
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### **Learning Challenges and Uneven Skill Development**

- Difficulties with organization, focus, attention (i.e. “executive functions”)
- Frustration resulting from attempts to adapt to the instruction style  
Mismatch between instructional style and student learning style
- Cognitive challenges
- Gaps in skills. May have high skill levels in some areas yet few skills in other areas (such as social competencies and daily living skills)

### **Environmental Mismatch and Change**

- Needing, using and insisting on routines
- Anxiety and stress escalates with unpredictable change, even small changes
- Needs control. Escalates behavior to gain control
- Mismatch between the environmental support, organization and design and sensory, communication, social and learning needs
- **Lacks necessary coping skills** to compensate for a difficult, confusing or overwhelming environment

### **Sensory/Biological Sensitivities and Preferences**

#### **Impact of Medical Concerns**

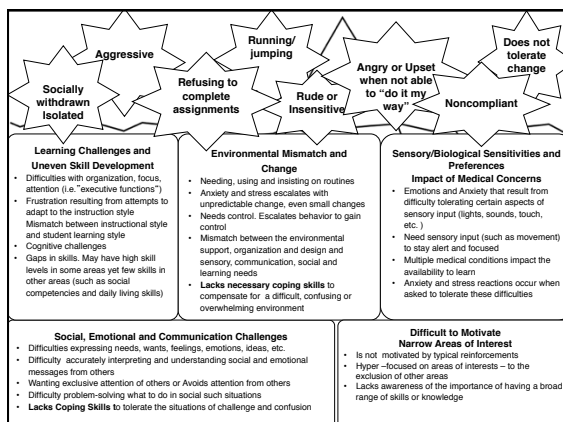
- Emotions and Anxiety that result from difficulty tolerating certain aspects of sensory input (lights, sounds, touch, etc. )
- Need sensory input (such as movement) to stay alert and focused
- Multiple medical conditions impact the availability to learn
- Anxiety and stress reactions occur when asked to tolerate these difficulties

### **Social, Emotional and Communication Challenges**

- Difficulties expressing needs, wants, feelings, emotions, ideas, etc.
- Difficulty accurately interpreting and understanding social and emotional messages from others
- Wanting exclusive attention of others or Avoids attention from others
- Difficulty problem-solving what to do in social such situations
- **Lacks Coping Skills** to tolerate the situations of challenge and confusion

### **Difficult to Motivate Narrow Areas of Interest**

- Is not motivated by typical reinforcements
- Hyper –focused on areas of interests – to the exclusion of other areas
- Lacks awareness of the importance of having a broad range of skills or knowledge



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## Identifying Areas of Challenge

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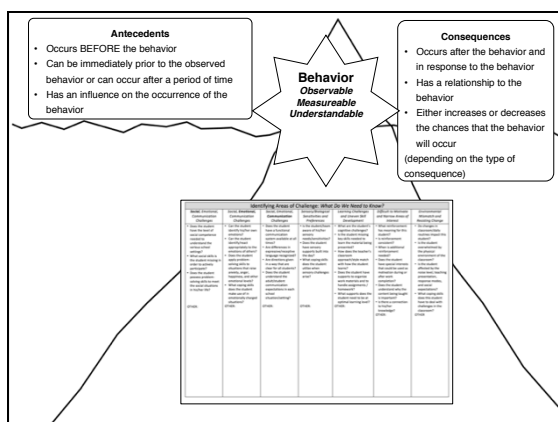
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# Identifying Areas of Challenge

Identifying Areas of Challenge: <i>What Do We Need to Know?</i>						
<i>Social, Emotional, Communication Challenges</i>	<i>Social, Emotional, Communication Challenges</i>	<i>Social, Emotional, Communication Challenges</i>	<i>Sensory/Biological Sensitivities and Preferences</i>	<i>Learning Challenges and Uneven Skill Development</i>	<i>Difficult to Motivate and Narrow Areas of Interest</i>	<i>Environmental Mismatch and Resisting Change</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does the student have the level of social competence needed to understand the various school settings?</li> <li>What social skills is the student missing in order to actively participate?</li> <li>Does the student possess problem-solving skills to meet the social situations in his/her life?</li> </ul> <p>OTHER:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can the student identify his/her own emotions?</li> <li>Can the student identify/react appropriately to the emotions of others?</li> <li>Does the student apply problem-solving skills to situations that raise anxiety, anger, happiness, and other emotional levels?</li> <li>What coping skills does the student make use of in emotionally charged situations?</li> </ul> <p>OTHER:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does the student have a functional communication system available at all times?</li> <li>Are differences in expressive/receptive language recognized?</li> <li>Are directions given in a way that are clear for all students?</li> <li>Does the student understand the adult/student communication expectations in each school situation/setting?</li> </ul> <p>OTHER:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is the student/team aware of his/her sensory needs/sensitivities?</li> <li>Does the student have sensory supports built into the day?</li> <li>What coping skills does the student utilize when sensory challenges arise?</li> </ul> <p>OTHER:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What are the student's cognitive challenges?</li> <li>Is the student missing key skills needed to learn the material being presented?</li> <li>How does the teacher's classroom approach/style match with how the student learns?</li> <li>Does the student have supports to organize work materials and to handle assignments / homework?</li> <li>What supports does the student need to be at optimal learning level?</li> </ul> <p>OTHER:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What reinforcement has meaning for this student?</li> <li>Is reinforcement consistent?</li> <li>When is additional reinforcement needed?</li> <li>Does the student have special interests that could be used as motivation during or after work completion?</li> <li>Does the student understand why the content being taught is important?</li> <li>Is there a connection to his/her knowledge?</li> </ul> <p>OTHER:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do changes in classroom/daily routines impact this student?</li> <li>Is the student overwhelmed by the physical environment of the classroom?</li> <li>Is the student affected by the noise level, teaching presentation, response modes, and social expectations?</li> <li>What coping skills does this student have to deal with challenges in the classroom?</li> </ul> <p>OTHER:</p>

# MOLLY



***Molly Screams  
loudly enough to  
interrupt the  
teacher's  
instruction to class***

## **Learning Challenges and Uneven Skill Development**

- Developmentally, she is more successful in areas of motor skills and less in pre-academic areas
- Academics are generally the focus of the circle time
- Her behavior sometimes allows her to avoid the difficulties and provides tasks better matched to her skills

## **Environmental Mismatch and Change**

- The way the circle time is set up is very uncomfortable to Molly
- Little personal space
- The behaviors allow her to at least temporarily escape the difficult setting

## **Sensory/Biological Sensitivities and Preferences**

### **Impact of Medical Concerns**


- Shelly is invading her space and triggering the sensory sensitivities
- Molly has little or no coping skills or ability to control the situation
- Molly escalated her behaviors to hitting to avoid the sensory overload...and it worked!

## **Social, Emotional and Communication Challenges**

- Molly has limited ability to communicate her anxiety and distress of the sensory and academic challenges that face her
- She is unable to cope with the social demands in light of the sensory challenges (touch)
- Screaming (and hitting) successfully “communicated” her displeasure and caused people to change their behaviors and demands

## **Difficult to Motivate Narrow Areas of Interest**

- Although Molly has definite areas of interest, they are only associated with specific activities in school
- The times when the behaviors generally occur (ex: circle time) do not include hands on, motor or music. Instead they are academically focused. These all become negative consequences

 <p><b>MOLLY</b></p> <p><i>Molly Screams loudly enough to interrupt the teacher's instruction to class</i></p>	
<b>Learning Challenges and Uneven Skill Development</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Developmentally, she is more successful in areas of motor skills and less in pre-academic areas</li> <li>Academics are generally the focus of the circle time</li> <li>Her behavior sometimes allows her to avoid the difficulties and provides tasks better matched to her skills</li> </ul>	<b>Environmental Mismatch and Change</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The way the circle time is set up is very uncomfortable to Molly</li> <li>Little personal space</li> <li>The behaviors allow her to at least temporarily escape the difficult setting</li> </ul>
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<b>Challenges Related to Behavior (To Help Identify)</b> <p><i>Summarize!</i></p> <p><b>1</b></p> <p><b>2</b></p> <p>(Setting Events? Triggers? Reinforcers?)</p>	<b>Strengths Related to Behavior (To Help Identify Strengths)</b> <p><b>3</b></p> <p><b>4</b></p> <p>What additional skills are needed to improve behavior?</p>	<b>Interventions to Address Behavior</b> <p><b>6</b></p> <p><b>5</b></p> <p>What Skills Need to be Taught?</p>
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<b>Challenges Related to Behavior (To Help Identify Antecedents and Consequences)</b> <p><b>1</b></p> <p><b>2</b></p> <p>(Setting Events? Triggers? Reinforcers?)</p>	<b>Strengths Related to Behavior (To Help Identify Strengths)</b> <p><b>3</b></p> <p><b>4</b></p> <p>What additional skills are needed to improve behavior?</p>	<b>Interventions to Address Behavior</b> <p><b>6</b></p> <p><b>5</b></p> <p>What Skills Need to be Taught?</p>
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**Challenges Related to Behavior**  
(To Help Identify  
Antecedents and Consequences)

**1**

**Learning Challenges and Uneven Skill Development**

- ❑ Academics are hard for Molly
- Environmental Mismatch and Change**
- ❑ Very Little personal Space/Others may touch Molly during circle time
  - ❑ Has a need to complete her work/play
- Sensory/Biological Sensitivities and Preferences**
- Impact of Medical Concerns**
- ❑ Touch ...even typical touching of peers... is very difficult to tolerate.

**Social, Emotional and Communication Challenges**

- ❑ Emotionally escalates quickly
- ❑ Cannot express Calmly and Verbally her displeasure
  - ❑ Unable to Cope
- Difficult to Motivate and Narrow Areas of Interest**
- ❑ Academics do not motivate... low on list of preferences

**2**

What are the Underlying Contributors to the Behavior  
(Setting Events? Triggers? Reinforcers?)

**Strengths Related to Behavior**  
(To Help Identify Strategies)

**3**

**Learning and Skill Development**

Environmental Matches

Sensory/Biological Preferences

Successful Social and Communication

Motivations and Interests

**4**

What additional skills are needed to improve behavior?

**MOLLY**

Molly Screams loudly enough to interrupt the teacher's instruction to class



**Interventions to Address Behavior**

**6**

**Ways of Improving Learning and Skill Development**

Modifications to Achieve Environmental Matches

Sensory/Biological Adaptations and Interventions

Social, Emotional and Communication Supports and Instruction

Ways to add Motivation and Reinforcement

**5**

What Skills Need to be Taught ?

## Formal Assessment Resources

Assessment movies and other information on  
OCALI website

[http://www.ocali.org/project/assessment\\_guide/page/assessment\\_measures](http://www.ocali.org/project/assessment_guide/page/assessment_measures)

**Evaluation**

The items in this section are listed in alphabetical order; this listing does not reflect any endorsement or mandate. The instruments are examples of resources, while comprehensive, the listing is not exhaustive. Instruments may have multiple uses and functions. Some assessment personnel may use certain instruments to determine or support identification of a disability. Others may use them to help guide program development.

- Autism Screening and Assessment
- Academic Achievement Assessment
- Adaptive Behavior Assessment
- Cognitive Assessment
- Developmental Assessment
- Emotional and Behavioral Assessment
- Functional Behavioral Assessment

- Motor Assessment
- Other Assessments
- Sensory Assessment
- Social and Relationship Assessment
- Speech-Language Assessment
- Transition and Vocational Assessment

<http://www.txautism.net/manual.html>

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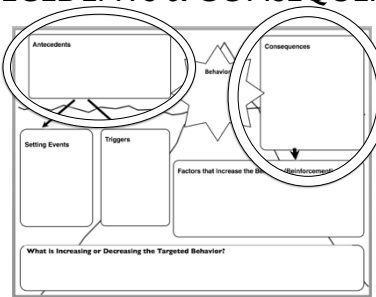
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## BEFORE NEXT WEBINAR: FILL OUT ANTECEDENTS & CONSEQUENCES



The diagram illustrates the relationship between Antecedents, Behavior, and Consequences. Antecedents (circled) lead to Behavior, which leads to Consequences (circled). Antecedents are influenced by Setting Events and Triggers. Consequences are influenced by Factors that Increase the Behavior and Reinforcement. A box at the bottom asks: 'What is Increasing or Decreasing the Targeted Behavior?'.

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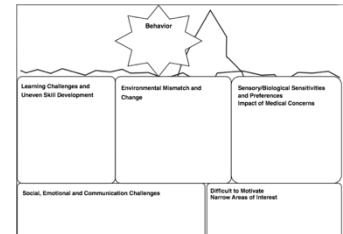
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## BEFORE NEXT WEBINAR: FILL OUT UNDERLYING ISSUES FOR YOUR INDIVIDUAL



The diagram shows a central 'Behavior' box at the top, connected to five boxes below: 'Learning Challenges and Unmet Skill Development', 'Environmental Mismatch and Change', 'Sensory/Physiological Sensitivities and Preferences/Impact of Medical Concerns', 'Social, Emotional and Communication Challenges', and 'Difficult to Motivate/Narrow Areas of Interest'.

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**BEFORE NEXT WEBINAR: FILL OUT SECTION ONE**

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linking research  
to real life.

A division of the ESC of Central Ohio

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