

Managing Behavior in CC Disorders

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July 19, 2008

Why do behaviors occur?

- Sensory
- Cognitive Rigidity/Poor adaptability
- Social Skills Deficits
- Emotional Skills Deficits
- Communication Deficits
- Cognitive Deficits
- Rewarded with what the child wants
- Inadequate discipline

Sensory

- Sensory seeking
 - Feels good, cool!
 - Calms
 - Nothing better to do
- Reaction to adverse sensory input
 - Hypersensitivity
 - Overstimulation
 - Pain/discomfort

Sensory: What to do?

- Sensory seeking
 - Confine to a place/time
 - Sensory diet
 - Use as a reward for other behaviors
 - Distract or Redirect
 - Take away the stimulating object

Sensory: What to do?

- Nothing better to do
 - Activity schedules
 - **IT'S OK** to have some self stim some of the time

Sensory: What to do?

- Reaction to adverse sensory input
 - Avoid triggers
 - Mask triggers
 - Gradual exposure (densesitization)
 - Find source of pain/discomfort

Cognitive Rigidity Poor adaptability

- Difficulty shifting attention
- Difficulty seeing alternatives
- Vapor lock
- Need for consistent routines

Cognitive Rigidity Poor adaptability: what to do?

- Routines
- Visual schedules of current and later events
- Warnings and transition aides
- Alternative solutions
- Work small changes into routine
- “Change is good, or at least OK”

Social skills deficits

- Wanting to be social and not knowing how
 - Difficulty gaining attention, appropriately
 - Difficulty maintaining attention, appropriately
 - Frustration with social rejection

Social Skills Deficits

- Lacking ‘social radar’
 - Indiscriminate imitation: what and who to imitate
 - Lack of awareness of what is inappropriate behavior
 - Difficulty looking at their behavior from someone else’s perspective
 - Difficulty looking at the effect of their behavior on someone else

Social skills deficits: What to do?

- Teach appropriate skills
 - Social Stories
 - Pragmatic language skills teaching
 - Emily Post
- Modeling, coaching, role play
- Behavioral Rehearsal
- Provide opportunity to practice
- Involve siblings/playmates

Social skills deficits: What to do?

- Be sure child has models of appropriate behavior
- Give explicit expectations of behavior
- Practice
- Notice and (sometimes) reward appropriate behavior
- Rules
- How would that make you feel?

Emotional Skills deficits

- Impaired comprehension of emotions
 - Picking up on subtle or early emotions
 - Interpreting one' s own emotions
 - Handling high emotions either way

Emotional Skills deficits

- Impaired communication of emotions
 - Restricted facial expression
 - Limited body language to express emotions
 - Limited words to express emotions
 - May use one phrase to express a range of emotions

Emotional skills deficits

- Impaired emotional regulation
 - Difficulty self calming
 - Difficulty responding to the comfort of others
 - Difficulty with modulation

Comprehension and expression of emotion: What to do

- Clearly state emotions
- Avoid emotional extremes that get child upset
- Label emotions/give them the words
- Provide escape routes
- Respect communication for escape
- Learn body language

Emotional Regulation: What to do

- Calm structured environments
- Respond calmly to the emotional outbursts
- Leave alone
- Structure to calm down, e.g. counting strategies
- Recognize early signals
- 'How can I help?'

Communication Deficits: Comprehension

- Cognitive delays: delays in language comprehension
- Processing of subtle phonetic and semantic aspects of language
- Processing abstract language (jokes, meanings of stories)

Communication Deficits: Comprehension What to do

- Need for simple language in instructions
 - # words in direction = # words child uses in sentences
- Ltd number of instructions at once
- Visual supports and Visual Schedules
- Physical prompts and Cues
- Explanations

Communication Deficits: Expression

- Deficits in articulation
 - Poor oromotor coordination
 - Apraxia
 - Lack of attention to precise articulation
- Language delay
- Meaningless language

Communication Deficits: Expression

- Emotional Non-communicativeness
- Language regression in face of high emotion
- Behavior used as communication

Communication deficits: What to do?

- Visual supports (pictures, signs, augmentative communication)
- Speech/language therapy
- Incorporate speech goals into home and school routines
- Demand what they can do, but don't overestimate

Cognitive Disability

- Attention to one cue (may not be relevant)
- Limited number of files open on the desktop
- Difficulty sequencing/organizing
- Lack of generalization
- Limited motivation
- Problem Solving

Cognitive Disability: What to do?

- Cue child to relevant info
- Walk them through the steps
- Use of visuals for organization/sequencing
- Teach in all environments
- Provide motivators
- Explicit problem solving techniques

Behaviors Inadvertently Reinforced

- Attention
- Access to wanted item/activity
- Escape or avoidance from unwanted activity/situation

Behaviors Inadvertently Reinforced: What to do

- Attention:
 - Ignore and redirect
 - Expect alternative behavior
- Access to wanted item/activity
 - No means no, but limit 'no'
- Escape or avoidance from unwanted activity/situation:
 - Follow through,
 - Make situation more palatable, less frustrating

Inadequate Discipline

- Inconsistent limit setting
- Poorly defined rules
- Inconsistent rules
- Spoiling
- Lack of structure within which child can practice the needed skill

Inadequate Discipline

- Make limits explicit:
 - Visual if needed
 - Practice
- Define rules and post
- Spoil for appropriate behaviors
- Structured environments
 - Routines, toys in order, etc.

First: Why?, then what to do.

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- Communication Deficits
- Cognitive Deficits
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- Inadequate discipline

Resources

- [Visual Supports for People with Autism-A Guide for Parents and Professionals](#) by Marlene J. Cohen and Donna L. Sloan
- [1-2-3 Magic](#) by Thomas Phelan
- [The Explosive Child](#) by Ross Greene
- [The Feelings Book](#): commxroads.com
- [The New Social Stories Workbook](#) by Carol Gray
- Online Aspergers Syndrome Information and Support Website: www.udel.edu/bkirby/asperger_social_skills_tab