Attention Maintained Behaviour

Workbook

A workbook designed to help you understand your child's behaviour and use strategies that actually work

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The Basics

What is attention maintained behaviour?

ACTION: identify behaviours that your child engages in to access attention

- All behaviour occurs for a reason.
- Attention maintained behaviour is behaviour your child engages in to gain your attention, regardless of whether the attention provided is positive or negative.

What is the reinforcer?

ACTION: if the reinforcer is attention, identify acceptable alternative responses your child can engage in to access your attention

- Ensure attention is the reinforcer for the behaviour in question.
- Work with your child to come up with alternative responses your child can engage in to access attention.

Use strategies that work

ACTION: test out some of the strategies in this workbook and see what works for you and your child

- It is not always possible to give your undivided attention.
- Involve your child in deciding which strategies to try out when managing attention seeking behaviours.

How can this workbook help?

ACTION: this workbook offers tried and tested strategies to help manage challenging behaviour. Take a moment to reflect on what worked and what didn't.

- This workbook is designed to help bring clarity to certain behaviours.
- Which strategies worked? Why do you think certain strategies worked better than others?

Strategies

ENRICHED ENVIRONMENT

- *It is important to ensure you are providing an enriched environment and delivering plenty of praise and attention regularly.*
- *By providing attention regularly, you are reducing the motivation for your child to engage in maladaptive behavior to access that reinforcer since they are getting it anyway.*
- *It could also help to provide many different forms of attention (hugs, tickles, praise, high 5s etc.)*

TIMERS

- *In the Escape Maintained Behaviors Workbook, it was mentioned to use timers for your child to help give them a more concrete understanding of time.*
- *In this workbook, you could use a timer for yourself to ensure you are providing frequent attention to your child. You could set the timer to go off every 20 minutes. When it does, regardless of what your child is doing, provide attention.*

ALTERNATIVE RESPONSES

- *It is important to teach your child an appropriate alternative response that will give them the same consequence as the challenging behavior.*
- *This could be as simple as teaching your child to say, "excuse me," as opposed to hitting you to access your attention.*
- *If your child is not vocal yet, you could teach them to tap your shoulder or you could teach them sign language or to communicate using a speech generating device.*

RESPONSE EFFORT

- *Whatever alternative response you teach, it is crucial to ensure that the response effort for your child is minimal.*
- *It should be easier for your child to get your attention through using the appropriate alternative response than through the challenging behavior.*
- *If they use the alternative response, they should get your attention immediately (at least at first) to show them that by tapping your shoulder instead of screaming they get attention.*

Strategies

VISUALS

- In order to support your child and assist them with understanding what they are expected to do to ask for attention, you could use visuals.
- This will look different depending on your child's level of understanding.
- It could be a picture of a child tapping on their parents arm or with a speech bubble saying, "excuse me," coming from their mouth.

BEHAVIOR CHAIN

- If your child's behavior escalates quickly and they are resistant to prompting, you could consider reinforcing responses which occur early in the behavior chain.
- Here is a behavior chain example: child laughs - flops on the floor - kicks and screams - bites if your attention is diverted for any reason.
- In the above scenario, you could reinforce the early behaviors so it does not escalate.

IGNORING

- As a consequence strategy, if the behavior is easy to ignore and it is safe and appropriate to do so, you could consider ignoring the problem behavior while prompting an appropriate response.
- For example, if your child hits to get attention, completely ignore the hitting (do not comment on it & remain neutral), then prompt an appropriate response, ex, say, "Hey, mom, look at this..." and then reinforce the appropriate response with attention.

REINFORCEMENT

- THIS IS THE MOST IMPORTANT!!!!
- When your child appropriately asks for your attention, give your undivided attention!
- It is now your job to follow through with the contingency and deliver the reward.
- You get more of what you reinforce!

INVOLVE YOUR CHILD

INCLUDE YOUR CHILD IN THE DECISIONS THAT INVOLVE THEM

- *Depending on your child's comprehension level, talk to your child about when you can give your undivided attention. Considering scheduling time in, such as every Friday, you play games together after school.*
- *Discuss, show, role play what divided attention looks like if you have to divide your attention among multiple children.*

List some of your child's priorities	How to balance your child's priorities & others
Have your child list times/activities where it is important to them to have your undivided attention.	*Brainstorm 3-5 ideas/strategies on how to balance your child's needs with those of the external world.*
1.	....
2.	....
3.	....

CONCLUSION

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- *I hope this workbook helped and that you were able to take something useful away from it. Always feel free to reach out. I'd love to hear what worked for you and what didn't.*
- *For similar material or content related to my book writing journey, feel free to check out the below handles:*

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