The background features a complex network diagram with various sized nodes (circles) in shades of blue, black, and grey, connected by thin grey lines. Some nodes are highlighted with larger, semi-transparent circles in the background.

MANAGING BEHAVIOR ISSUES DURING THERAPY SESSIONS

Presentation by Evan Anderson, PhD and Amy Thomas, OTR/L

OUTLINE OF CONTENT

- Management of Expectations
- Understanding Behaviors
- Environmental Considerations
- Behavioral Management Strategies
- Therapeutic Goals
- Working with Parents



MANAGEMENT OF EXPECTATIONS

Consideration 1: Progress will be minor

Consideration 2: Progress will be cyclical

Consideration 3: Success will look differently

Consideration 4: Sessions will not go as planned

Consideration 5: Parents can understand their child's restrictions better than their abilities

Consideration 6: Families develop their own patterns and language

UNDERSTANDING BEHAVIORS

- Function is more important than form (What is it accomplishing for them?)
 - Social attention
 - Obtain something
 - Escape/avoidance
 - Sensory stimulation
- Equally important is what is maintaining the behavior
- Non-verbal does not mean unintelligent
- Most kids will give warnings before giving up or melting down
 - Grunting, yelling, stomping, slamming, throwing (do not ignore), hitting self or others (do not ignore)

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

- Principle 1: Remove and relocate until the environment is appropriate
- Principle 2: Display the reinforce unless it will be distracting
- Principle 3: Move towards creation of a typical environment
- Principle 4: Determine if novelty or consistency is more conducive to participation
- Principle 5: Attempt to accomplish goals without restrictive equipment.
- Principle 6: Parents are part of the environment
- Principle 7: Use soft warnings, visual timers, countdowns, visual supports to assist with transitions and emphasize next preferred task

BEHAVIORAL MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES: ATTENTION SPAN/ON-TASK BEHAVIOR

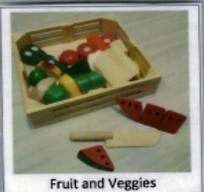
- Create a schedule. This should be collaborative when possible
 - Allow child to select order of tasks, either from physical toy or with visual supports
- Take time to teach/establish trust in the process of a session
- Offer choices both for tasks and for reinforcement
 - Always have an exit strategy for the reinforce “We are going to swing for 2 minutes, then I will give you warning and help you out of the swing”
- Transition often between work and play (start 1 minute work/5 minute play if needed)
- Establish if patient prefers task- or time-oriented tasks (subject to change)

My Schedule

Three horizontal colored bands (purple, yellow, green) with small square icons in the center of each band.



ABC Puzzle



Fruit and Veggies



Eggs



Time to Play



Ms. Amy



Dr. Anderson



All Done

FIRST



Slot Toys

THEN



Barrel

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When I do 5



I Get



Playground

BEHAVIORAL MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES: GENERAL DEVELOPMENTAL TIPS

- Do not give in to **tugs or pushes**. Wait for words or healthy gestures
- **Acknowledge early-session** screams, pounds, stomps, cries, pouting, etc. as an attempt to communicate. Respond with **words** and attempt **mild compromise**
- **Be active, bring activities to them,** and **be flexible with delivery**
- When giving a break, always state the stopping point beforehand
- Start small/short, develop into **bigger/longer**



BEHAVIORAL MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES: SENSORY VERSUS BEHAVIORAL

- Use relaxation as breaks
- Consider alternatives that may skirt sensory issues
- *Balance escape behavior versus reaching point of emotional dysregulation*
- *Stimming*

BEHAVIORAL MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES: TANTRUMS

P.R.I.D.E Skills

P- **Praises** (Labeled) tell a child exactly what you like and want to see again

- Increases the praised behavior, shows approval

R- **Reflect**, repeat, or paraphrase what the child says

- Child is leading (conversation), shows interest, demonstrates acceptance and understanding, improves speech

I- **Imitation** copies what your child is doing with the toys or exercises

- Child is leading (activities), demonstrates approval, increases imitation of what you do, increases enjoyment, teaches child how to play and take turns

D- **Descriptions** say what your child is doing

- Child is leading (activities), demonstrates interest, teaches concepts, increases attention, models good speech and vocabulary, organizes child's thoughts about activity

E- **Enjoyment** means that you act happy and warm when you interact with child

- Builds a relationship, models warmth in play

BEHAVIORAL MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES: TANTRUMS CONT...

Ignore non-preferred behaviors

- Look Away
- Show no expression
- Say nothing
- Continue activity w/out child (optional)

The removal of PRIDE skills is what makes ignoring effective

How you manage the tantrum will determine how often the behavior will occur in the future

Extinction burst graph

Stop the Activity and take reinforcers off the table if they become aggressive

THINGS TO AVOID

- “That was better than last week.”
- “We had a good day today.”
- Too many questions
- Commands w/out a choice
- Vague compliments
- Telling them what NOT to do

THERAPEUTIC GOALS: PRINCIPLES FOR LONG- AND SHORT-TERM GOAL SETTING

- **Principle 1:** Goals need to be broken down into component parts
- **Principle 2:** Create one, non-negotiable goal/objective for each session
 - If it is not necessary for your goal, do not address it (ie, clean up)
- **Principle 3:** Move forward in every session
- **Principle 4:** Do not be afraid to start small and/or approximal
- **Principle 5:** Have two ways to complete a goal (e.g. time vs. task; sitting down vs. standing up OR two possible activities)
- **Principle 6:** Behavioral problems are a treatment problem so include behavior goals in you goal setting

GOAL EXAMPLES

- Child will increase frustration tolerance during therapy as demonstrated by reduction of crying/tantruming behavior to 2 episodes per session for 3 consecutive sessions
- Using adaptive supports (ie, soft warning, visual timer, countdown, visual supports), child will complete 4 of 5 transitions during treatment session for 3 consecutive sessions
- Child will demonstrate improved engagement as indicated by participating in purposeful play with toys with no more than 2 redirections of repetitive/stimming play (ie, piling, flicking light switch, door handles, etc) 4 of 5 opportunities
- Child will demonstrate improved emotional regulation as indicated by participation in teethbrushing routine w/o tantrum 4 of 5 opportunities per caregiver report
- Child will tolerate facilitated play for increased time periods without aggressive behaviors (hit/scratch) with mastery determined by caregiver report and clinical judgment
- Child will participate in turn taking by giving an object to another person with cues provided as needed on 4 out 5 opportunities

WORKING WITH PARENTS

What is working at home?

What is school doing?

Give the parents jobs in session

Seek guidance on interpreting behaviors

Give homework assignments to parents

Explain you goals and plan

Have parents demonstrate techniques