

Understanding Behaviour



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What is Behaviour?



Behaviour refers to an action or reaction to an internal or external event or occurrence in the environment.

- *Internal: pain, sensation, feelings...*
- *External: Noises, smells, lighting, instruction..*





- *These behaviours can be a direct result of not being able to communicate their needs or wants.*
- *Sometimes challenging behaviours are caused by anxiety, sensory processing issues and underlying medical issues.*

What and Why??

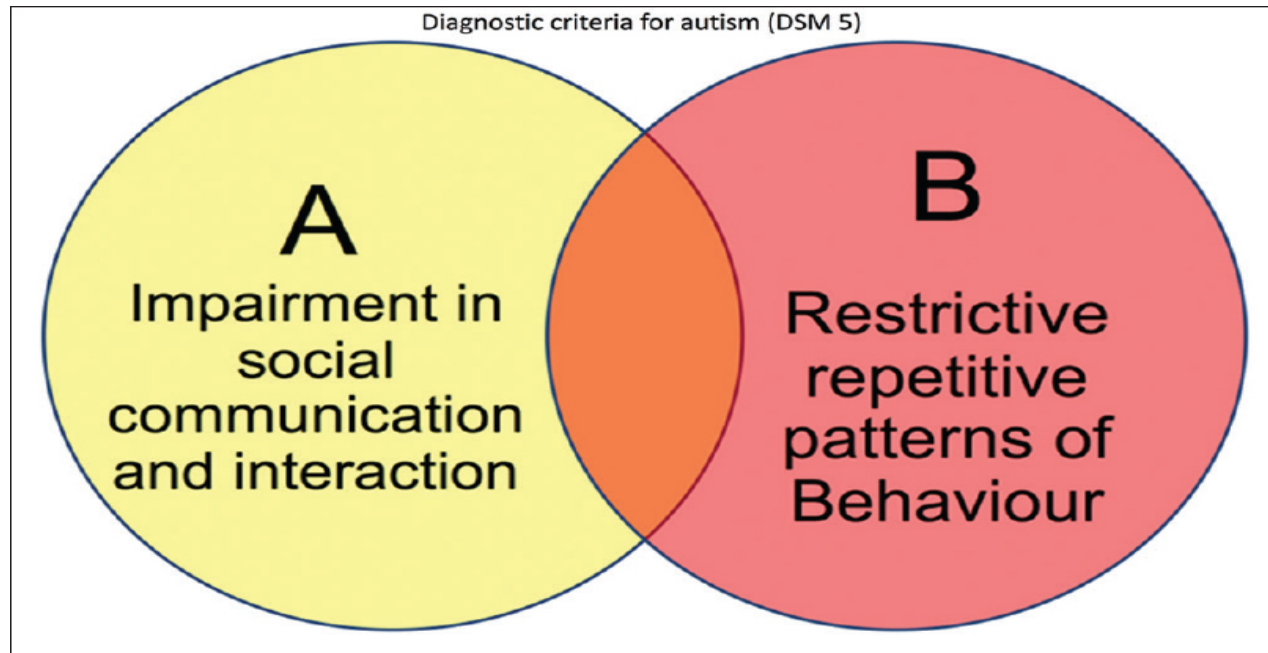
*The **topography** of a behaviour describes **what** behaviour is occurring*

*However, the **function** of the behaviour is needed so we can understand **why** it is happening*

Why do people with autism behave differently?



Individuals with autism have a different way of thinking and interpreting information.



Impairment in social communication and interaction

- *Expressive and receptive language*
- *Expressing needs, feelings and views*
- *Understanding and interpreting the communication of others*
- *Understanding the rules of social interaction*
- *Making and sustaining friendships*
- *Interpreting and expressing own emotions and feelings and that of others*
- *Functional communication*

Restricted and Repetitive patterns of Behaviour

- *Rigidity in thinking and behaviour*
- *Ritualistic behaviour*
- *Difficulties with selectivity or narrow focus*
- *Narrow interests and obsessions*

Sensory Processing Issues

- *Sensory overload (hypersensitivity)*
- *Sensory seeking (hyposensitivity)*

Hypersensitivity and Hyposensitivity

- *Vision*
- *Hearing*
- *Touch*
- *Taste*
- *Smell*



- *Proprioception (body position awareness)*
- *Vestibular system (balance and spatial orientation)*

Understanding Behaviour

Knowing why an inappropriate behaviour occurs, allows us to predict and prevent that behaviour from being repeated.



Functions of Behaviour

- *Attention*
- *Avoidance*
- *Automatic*
- *Access to tangible items or activities*

Attention:

Attention is important for social development. However, some children with autism engage in inappropriate behaviours because they very often do not know how to communicate their needs in a positive way.

Negative Vs Positive Attention

Very often a child will see no difference between positive or negative attention.



Attention Intervention

- *Ignore the behaviour*
- *Build skills using visual supports*

How to Build Skills:

- *Picture or word communications systems (PECS)*
- *Sign language (Lámh)*
- *Reduced language*
- *Social stories*

Avoidance:

Not all behaviours occur because the child is trying to access something.

Sometimes problem behaviours occur because the child is trying to get away from something or avoid a situation altogether.

Why does Avoidance Behaviour occur?

- *Task/activity avoidance*
- *Social avoidance*
- *Sensory Experience/Environment avoidance*

Avoidance Intervention

- *Teach tasks differently*
- *Teach social skills*
- *Reduce or increase sensory input where possible and teach coping strategies*

Automatic

The function of some behaviours can be internally satisfying and have nothing to do with anything external to the person.

These behaviours give the individual a form of internal satisfaction or sensation. They are often referred to as self-stimulating behaviours.

Automatic Behaviours

- *Stimming*
- *Rocking or spinning*
- *Licking*
- *Smearing*
- *Pica*
- *Fingers in ears*
- *Flapping*

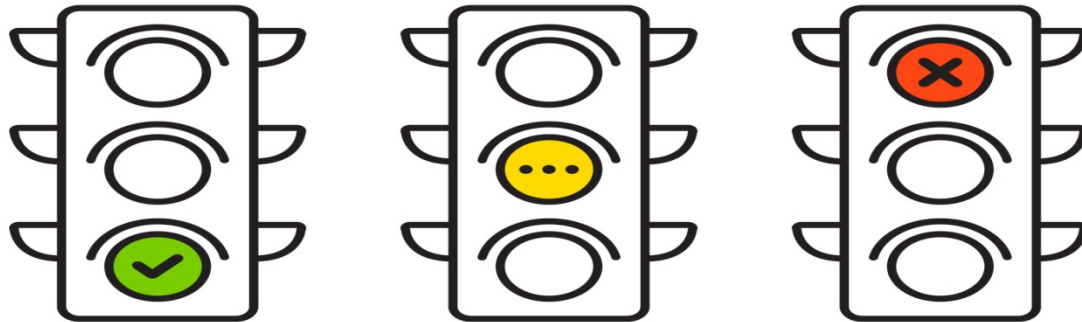


Automatic Intervention

- *Block any behaviours that could cause harm.*
- *Replace the inappropriate behaviour with a more appropriate one.*
- *Use visuals such as 'Quiet mouth' or 'Quiet feet' and demonstrate the action.*

Access to Items or activities

Some behaviours occur so the child can get a tangible item or gain access to a desired activity.



Why does this behaviour occur?

- *The child does not know how to communicate their needs.*
- *It is quicker to gain access to the item or activity.*
- *Behaviour is often maintained because it is easier to give the child what they want.*

Access Intervention

- *Use planned ignoring*
- *Teach communication skills using visual supports*

How can we recognise why a behaviour is occurring?



ABC.....

- *Antecedent*
- *Behaviour*
- *Consequence*



Antecedents

Antecedent refers to the action or event that occurred before the behaviour. They are things that contribute to or cause the behaviour to happen.

Examples of Antecedents

- *A request from a parent/teacher*
- *The removal of a toy*
- *A difficult maths question*
- *A change in routine*

Setting Events

These are events that happen before the antecedent for the behaviour. They are not the cause of the behaviour but they make it more likely to happen.

Examples of Setting Events

- *Illness*
- *Lack of sleep*
- *Crowds of people*
- *Noisy places*
- *Hunger/thirst*
- *Weather*



Ask the question

- *Where did the behaviour occur?*
- *With whom?*
- *When?*
- *What activity?*
- *Is the child tired, hungry, thirsty?*
- *Is it too hot or too cold?*
- *What is the noise level?*
- *What were the other children or adults doing?*

Behaviour

A problem behaviour that causes concern.

It is a behaviour that can cause a danger such as physical aggression or a behaviour that interferes with learning such as repeatedly disrupting.

Examples of Behaviours

- *Assaultive behaviour*
- *Self-injurious behaviour*
- *Screaming*
- *Crying*
- *Scripting*
- *Pica*
- *Smearing*

Consequence

Consequences are what happen directly after the behaviour has occurred.

Consequences can serve to either increase or reduce the likelihood of the behaviour occurring again.

Examples of Consequences

- *A child who screams to obtain something and gets, it is likely to repeat this behaviour.*
- *A child who bangs their head to avoid a situation and gets to avoid it, is likely to repeat this behaviour.*

Preventative Strategies

- *By being prepared and understanding your child's needs you can prevent behaviours occurring.*
- *Set the child up to succeed by having the appropriate environment and communicative tools available.*
- *Teach the child to communicate their needs so that the next time something happens they know how to let you know what their needs or wants are.*

Thank You For Your Attention

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Any Questions?