

EXTINCTION

WHAT IS IT?

Reinforcement, punishment, and extinction are basic principles of behavior. Extinction is an evidence-based practice, which refers to altering the environment to withhold reinforcement of previously reinforced behaviors to diminish the occurrence of undesirable behaviors (Cooper et al., 2019). Extinction often decreases behaviors maintained by positive reinforcement, negative reinforcement, and automatic reinforcement (Miltenberger, 2016). Extinction is NOT the same as planned ignoring, which only works for attention maintained behavior. It is also NOT ignoring the student.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Extinction is a procedure used to decrease or extinguish problem behaviors. Behaviors can be decreased without the use of aversive stimuli.

WHEN CAN IT BE USED?

Extinction can be used for a variety of low-intensity behaviors maintained by escape or attention. It should be applied only after more positive interventions have been shown (through data) to be ineffective.

HOW TO IMPLEMENT

1. The problem behavior is first identified and defined in enough detail that everyone can measure the same behaviors in the same environments.
2. A data collection procedure is created and baseline data is collected on the frequency, intensity, and/or duration of the problem behavior.
3. The function of the behavior is identified through data collection across environments and people. The antecedents and consequences are analyzed to hypothesize why the behavior is occurring.
4. The extinction procedure plan is created based on the function to assure the correct motivation is targeted. Replacement behavior procedures may be identified here. See **
 - A list of specific behaviors within the problem behavior (and the replacement behavior if used) are identified and specific staff responses are listed to assure consistent application. These responses may include other procedures such as differential reinforcement, removal of items or activities, blocking, or communication training.
5. The staff practice implementation to assure consistency, then the plan is implemented.
6. Data is collected on the replacement behavior and problem behavior to make sure the intervention is effective.
7. The plan is reviewed and adjusted where necessary.

HOW TO IMPLEMENT, EXAMPLES

- Extinction of escape behaviors
 - Example: Josh falls to the ground whenever he sees a word card he doesn't know.
 - Extinction: The teacher sits on the ground beside him and continues the lesson.
- Extinction of access to tangibles behaviors
 - Example: Mark screams and cries when he wants to keep listening music.
 - Extinction: The teacher removes his music when he screams and cries.
- Extinction of attention-seeking behaviors
 - Example: Amy yells "Bazinga" each time her paraprofessional helps another student.
 - Extinction: The paraprofessional ignores the "Bazinga" comments.

When first implementing extinction, the problem behavior will likely increase in frequency and/or intensity before it is extinguished (called an extinction burst) as the learner tries to access the reinforcement previously given. The use of non-contingent reinforcement can reduce length or intensity of extinction bursts.

**** Extinction is usually most effective with the implementation of differential reinforcement. For more on differential reinforcement procedures, scan here.**



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