Behavior Reduction: Punishment Procedures

This training program is based on the RBT Task List (2nd ed.) and is designed to meet the 40-hour training requirement for RBT certification. The program is offered independent of the BACB.
References


- Behavior Analyst Supervisor (BAS) RBT Study Guide→ [https://behavioranalystsupervisor.com/](https://behavioranalystsupervisor.com/)

In This Presentation

- D-6 Implement crisis/emergency procedures according to protocol.
- F-5 Maintain client dignity.
Introduction

As a principle of behavior, punishment is not about punishing the person.

Punishment is a: response consequence

contingency that suppresses the future frequency of similar responses.
Punishment

- Punishment has occurred when a response is followed immediately by a stimulus change that decreases the future frequency of similar responses.

- A decrease in the future frequency of the occurrence of the behavior must be observed before a consequence-based intervention qualifies as punishment.
Definitions & Nature of Punishment

Positive Punishment & Negative Punishment

Positive Punishment

Presentation of a stimulus (or an increase in the intensity of an already present stimulus) immediately following a behavior that results in a decrease in the frequency of the behavior.
Negative Punishment

The termination of an already present stimulus (or a decrease in the intensity of an already present stimulus) immediately following a behavior that results in a decrease in the future frequency of the behavior.
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<th>Positive (add stimulus)</th>
<th>Reinforcement (Increase / maintain behavior)</th>
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<td>Add pleasant stimulus to Increase / maintain behavior</td>
<td>Add aversive stimulus to Decrease behavior</td>
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<td>Negative (remove stimulus)</td>
<td>Remove aversive stimulus to Increase / maintain behavior</td>
<td>Remove pleasant stimulus to Decrease behavior</td>
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PUNISHMENT 1

Behavior
You touch a hot iron.

Presentation of an unpleasant stimulus
Your hand is burned.

Frequency of behavior decreases
You no longer touch hot irons.

PUNISHMENT 2 (Penalty)

Behavior
You're careless with your ice cream cone.

Removal of a pleasant stimulus
The ice cream falls on the ground.

Frequency of behavior decreases
You're not as careless with the next cone.

Monarch Center for Autism, 2017
Definitions & Nature of Punishment

Possible Side Effects and Problems with Punishment

- Elicitation of undesirable emotional response and aggression
- Escape and Avoidance
- Increased rate of the problem behavior under nonpunishment
- Modeling undesirable behavior
- Not teaching the learner what to do
- Overusing punishment because of the negative reinforcement it provides the punishing agent.
Definitions & Nature of Punishment

Possible Side Effects and Problems with Punishment

Elicitation of undesirable emotional response and aggression.

Punishment, especially positive punishment in the form of aversive stimulation, may evoke aggressive behavior with respondent and operant components.
Definitions & Nature of Punishment

Possible Side Effects and Problems with Punishment

Elicitation of undesirable emotional response and aggression.

Aggressive behavior following punishment that occurs because it has enable the person to escape the aversive stimulation in the past is referred to as operant aggression.
 Definitions & Nature of Punishment

Possible Side Effects and Problems with Punishment

Escape and Avoidance

Natural reactions to aversive stimulation

As the intensity of the punisher increases, so does the likelihood of escape and avoidance.

Can be minimized by providing alternative responses that come into contact with reinforcement and avoid the punisher.
Definitions & Nature of Punishment

Possible Side Effects and Problems with Punishment

Behavioral Contrast

Change in one component of a multiple schedule that increases or decreases the rate of responding on that component is accompanied by a change in the response rate in the opposite direction on the other, unaltered component of the schedule.
Definitions & Nature of Punishment

Possible Side Effects and Problems with Punishment

Punishment may involve undesirable modeling

Punishment tactics may model undesirable behaviors.

2 decades of research have found strong correlation between young children’s exposure to harsh and excessive punishment and antisocial behavior and conduct disorders as adolescents and adults. (Patterson, 1982; Patterson, Reid, & Dishion, 1992; Sprague & Walker, 2000).
Definitions & Nature of Punishment

Possible Side Effects and Problems with Punishment

Negative Reinforcement of the Punishing Agent’s Behavior

Punishment reinforces the punisher.

Punishment tends to terminate the punished behavior quickly. The punisher’s behavior tends to be negatively reinforced by the immediate cessation of the punished behavior.
Interventions derived from punishment (positive and negative)
Positive Punishment Interventions:

- Reprimands
- Response blocking
- Contingent Exercise
- Restitution Overcorrection
- Positive Practice
- Negative Practice
Reprimands

Reprimand is the most commonly used positive punishment procedure. It is given through verbal means to reduce the frequency of a target behavior. It is not an effective way if the behavior is to seek attention as the reprimand provides attention the subject may seek.
Examples of Positive Punishment Interventions

Response Blocking

Physically intervening as soon as the person begins to emit the problem behavior to prevent or “block” the completion of the response has been shown to be effective in reducing the frequency of some problem behaviors.

Suppressive effects of response blocking may be due to punishment or to extinction.
Examples of Positive Punishment Interventions

Response Blocking

Response blocking as a treatment intervention must be approached with great care.

Side effects such as aggression and resistance to the response blocking procedure have occurred in some studies.
Contingent Exercise

Contingent exercise is a form of punishment that requires a person to engage in a physical exercise that is unrelated to the problem behavior.

Examples of contingent exercise

- A girl yells at her mother.
  - She is told to mop the floor.

- A boy sleeps in class.
  - He is told to run on the track for 10 minutes.
Restitution Overcorrection

In restitutorial overcorrection, when damage is caused, a person will be required to restore the environment to a better condition than before the event.

A boy spits on the floor.

He is told to mop the entire floor.
Positive Practice

In positive practice, when a person misbehaves, he/she will be required to engage in an appropriate behavior repeatedly.

A girl misspells a word. She is told to write the word 50 times.
Negative Practice

In negative practice, when a person engages in an inappropriate behavior, he/she will be required to engage in the inappropriate behavior repeatedly.

A boy is drawing on the wall.

He is told to continue drawing until he is exhausted.
Negative Punishment Interventions:

TIME OUT:

• **Non-exclusion time outs:** planned ignoring, contingent observation, time out ribbon

• **Exclusion time outs:** time out room, hallway time out, partition time out
TIME OUT

Time out is a punishment procedure that withdraws access to reinforcers for a specified time due to the person’s inappropriate behavior. There are non-exclusion time outs and exclusion time outs.

Non-exclusion Time outs (A person is not removed from the activity area.)
- Planned Ignoring
- Contingent Observation
- Time out Ribbon

Exclusion Time outs (A person is removed from the activity area.)
- Time out Room
- Hallway Time out
- Partition Time out
Planned Ignoring

Attention is withheld for a brief moment due to the person’s inappropriate behavior.

I like the way you are raising your hand.

Teacher! Teacher! I know the answer!

A teacher is ignoring her student because he is not raising his hand.
Contingent Observation

A person is removed from a reinforcing activity due to his/her inappropriate behavior yet stays within the environment to observe others engaging in the activity.

Because you hit Mike, You have to sit at the bench and just watch the game.
Time out Ribbon

Everyone wears a ribbon on their wrist and when one misbehaves, his/hers will be taken away. Those who have the ribbon will have a privilege to receive a reinforcer.

You are losing your ribbon because you lied to me.
Partition Time out

When one misbehaves, he/she is sent to an area behind a cubicle or a wall that restricts his/her view for a specified time.

Time out Room

When one misbehaves, he/she will be sent to a room that is designed to deny access to a reinforcer for a specified time.

Hallway Time out

When one misbehaves, he/she is sent to the hallway for a specified time.
Important Keys for Time Out (Shibutani, 2017)

- Time out is not effective when one is avoiding a task.
- Time out may teach a person that he/she has misbehaved but time out itself does not teach an appropriate behavior.
- While a person is receiving time out, he/she will lose time to learn ongoing academic, social, communication skills.
- When exclusion time out is used, the adult would not know what the client is doing in the time out setting.
Guidelines for Using Punishment Effectively

Select Effective and Appropriate Punishers

Punishment as part of a behavior change program has nothing to do with retribution.

1. Punishment is not about threats.
Guidelines for Using Punishment Effectively

Deliver the Punishment Unemotionally

Punishment should be delivered in a business-like, matter-of-fact manner.

Resist statements such as, “I told you so.” “Now, you’ve gone and done it.” and “What do you have to say for yourself?”

All you want to do is modify behavior, not make people atone for their sins.
Guidelines for Using Punishment Effectively

Provide Response Prompts and Reinforcement for Alternative Behavior.

Punishment is most effective when the learner can make other responses for reinforcement.

The more reinforcement the learner obtains by emitting appropriate behavior, the less motivate he will be to emit the problem behavior.
Guidelines for Using Punishment Effectively

Record, Graph and Evaluate Data Daily

Data collection in the first session or two of a punishment based intervention is especially critical.

Graphing the frequency of the target behavior before, during, and after the presentation of the punisher establishes the effectiveness of punishment.
Ethical Considerations Regarding the Use of Punishment

Right to Safe and Humane Treatment

The first ethical canon and responsibility for any human services program is to do no harm.
Ethical Considerations Regarding the Use of Punishment

Least Restrictive Alternative

The less intrusive procedures should be tried and found to be ineffective before more intrusive procedures are implemented.

Interventions can be viewed as falling along a continuum of restrictiveness from least to most.
Ethical considerations Regarding the Use of Punishment

Right to Effective Treatment

Failing to use a punishment procedure that research has show to suppress self-destructive behavior similar to the client’s is unethical because it withholds a potentially effective treatment and may maintain a dangerous or uncomfortable state for the person.
Final Thoughts

- Punishment is observed in everyday life... leads to learning (what we should not do).
- Ethics must always be considered prior to implementing a punishment intervention.
- Punishment itself does not teach appropriate behaviors.
  - Replacement behaviors must also be taught.
- As punishment may show immediate effects, it sometimes reinforces behaviors or the individuals implementing the procedure which can lead to over-using punishment procedures.
  - Unethical
D6- Crisis/ Emergency Procedures
Crisis Plans

Often when SIB (Self-injurious Behaviors) or Aggression has been observed or is suspected

- Discuss and **role-play**
  - ESPECIALLY if physical redirection or restraint is involved
- May require specific training for certain plans
- **Review procedure** regularly and AT LEAST monthly to ensure that the procedure remains clear
Behavior Guidelines

- Specific to the individual
- Preventative strategies
- How to handle behaviors if they are not prevented
- When to move into crisis planning
**BEHAVIOR GUIDELINES**

**General behavior guidelines**
The Touchstone Center’s Behavioral Guidelines are committed to keeping clients safe, encouraging clients to enjoy and achieve and promoting moral development.

**Proactive tactics to be in place throughout the day:**
- Keep reinforcement high for appropriate behavior (remaining in seat, following directions etc.). Use behavior specific praise and a thick schedule of reinforcement when required.
- Provide opportunities for independence – e.g. tidying away materials, transitioning – have AW carry his own materials as much as possible, etc. Hold hands when transitioning locations.
- Be enthusiastic and make learning fun! Refer to the ‘101 ways to praise’ list for novel ways to deliver vocal reinforcement.
- Run preference assessments and use reinforce menus; provide choices of what AW may like to work for.
- Provide opportunities to mand.

**Specific behaviour to be targeted:** Physical aggression: defined as hitting, kicking, scratching, biting, throwing items (include any attempts) towards another person

**Specific active and reactive tactics:**
- Response block as much as possible
- Leave space between yourself and the client
- Provide something functional for client to do with his hands such as holding materials, picking up toys, etc. can use most to least prompting as needed. Reinforce appropriate behaviors such as manding for an item or removal of a task.
- Keep a very thick schedule of reinforcement
- Provide frequent choices
- Use a lottery system to determine how many tokens client will earn to gain access to reinforcement (ex.: he can pull a card, roll a dice, etc)
- Utilize safety care strategies to de-escalate behaviors.

**Data collection**
- Record frequency data each time this behavior occurs
- Graph as frequency per day
- See program in binder targeting appropriate touch