

Webcast Series: Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) and Challenging Behavior

Using FBA to Understand Challenging Behavior after TBI

TBI Webcast Series

1. The Effects of TBI on Student Behavior
2. Ten Strategies for Preventing Challenging Behavior after TBI.
- *3. Using FBA to Understand Challenging Behavior after TBI
4. Planning Interventions for Challenging Behavior after TBI

Traumatic Brain Injury Webcast Series

Sponsored by: Wisconsin Department of
Public Instruction

Presenter: Julia McGivern, PhD
University of Wisconsin Madison



Before Viewing this Webcast

- Please view the first two webcasts in this series
 1. The Effects of TBI on Student Behavior
 2. Ten Strategies for Preventing Challenging Behavior after TBI
- Please download the following document which will be referenced in this presentation and is available at <http://dpi.wi.gov/sped/tbi.html>
 - TBI Functional Behavioral Assessment
- All names of students have been changed and identifiable situations altered to protect student confidentiality

Additional Resources to View

Level I Traumatic Brain Injury Training Modules

- Module 1: Introduction
- Module 2: Understanding TBI
- Module 3: Returning to School
- Module 4: Planning to Meet the Needs of Students with TBI
- **Module 5: Providing Positive Behavioral Interventions**
- Module 6: Supporting Students with Mild Brain Injury

<http://www.dpi.state.wi.us/sped/tbi-trg-pres.html>

TBI and Memory Module Webcast

<http://dpi.wi.gov/sped/tbi-memory.html>

Overview of Webcast 3

- What is functional behavioral assessment?
- What happens before the challenging behavior?
- What happens after the challenging behavior?
- What need does the behavior meet?



Behavioral Control is Complex

Human
behavior is
functional

- Behavior is meaningful, not random

Human
behavior is
predictable

- Sometimes difficult with students with TBI

Human
behavior is
changeable

- But not always easy to change

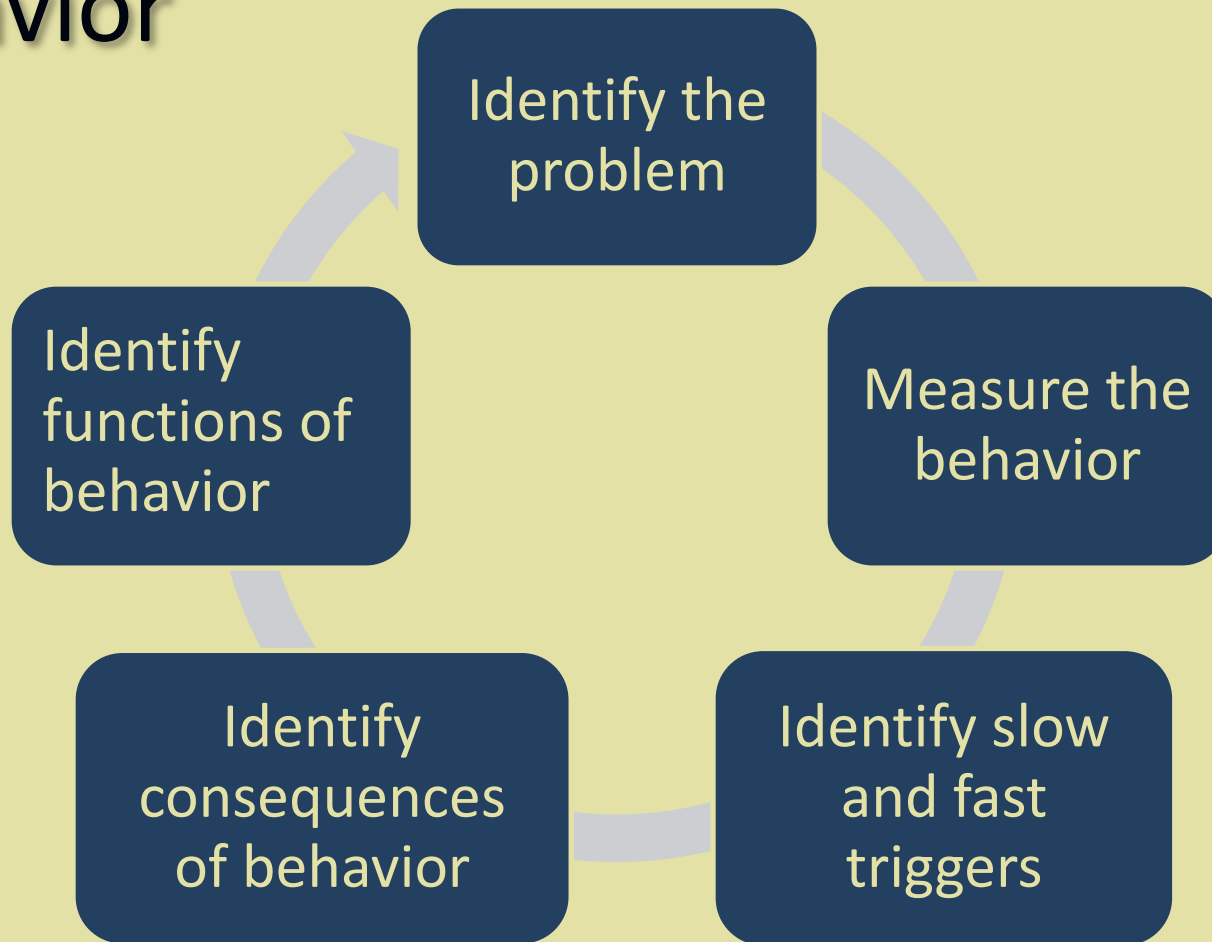
Functional Behavioral Assessment

“FBA is a method of gathering information about situational events that predict and maintain problem behavior” (Crone & Horner, 2003)

- FBA is a continuous process (not a one-time event) for identifying
 - the purpose or function of the behavior
 - the variables that influence the behavior
 - components of an effective behavioral intervention plan (BIP)

DPI, May, 2000

Steps in a Functional Assessment of Behavior



Example: Joe



- Joe is a sixth-grade student returning to school four weeks after being injured in a bike accident
 - **Joe was unconscious for 12 hours**
 - **Joe is in an early stage of recovery**
- Every day in the lunch line, Joe shoves the students in front of him or behind him. A supervisor stands near him and reminds him not to push, but he does anyway

1. Identify the Problem

State the problem clearly

- State what the student is doing

What is the problem Joe is having in the cafeteria?

- Joe shoves the student in front of or behind him.

2. Measure the Behavior

Why is it important to measure the behavior?

- To determine severity, frequency, and intensity of the problem
- To identify any patterns in the behavior
- To have a baseline so we know whether the behavior is getting better or worse

How frequently does the behavior occur?
With what intensity? For how long?

- Joe's behavior occurs every day
- It is brief but intensive
- Intervene? Yes!

3. Identify Slow and Fast Triggers

Slow triggers (or setting events) are factors that set the stage for the behavior to occur

Internal

- Physiological (fatigue, pain)
- Cognitive state (confusion, slow processing)
- Emotional (fear, anger, frustration, depression)
- Perceptual (lack of accurate understanding of events, tasks)

External

- People (teachers, supervisors, other students)
- Tasks (academic tasks, physical tasks)
- Setting (classroom, recess, gym, cafeteria)

Slow Triggers: Joe

- **What slow triggers might set the stage for Joe's behavior in the cafeteria?**
 - **Internal triggers**
 - Physical: Hunger? Pain? Fatigue?
 - Cognitive state: Confusion? Overstimulation?
 - Emotional: Anger? Frustration?
 - Perceptual: Lack of understanding of what is happening?
 - **External triggers**
 - Noise in the cafeteria?
 - Supervisor?
 - Particular student in front of/behind Joe?

3. Identify Slow and Fast Triggers

Fast triggers are events/stimuli that immediately precede the behavior and influence whether it occurs

What fast triggers may affect Joe's behavior?

- Line slows down?
- Boy in front turns around?
- Boy behind Joe shoves Joe?
- Supervisor tells Joe to remember not to shove?

Using Knowledge of Slow Triggers to Prevent Challenging Behavior

Joe's slow triggers: Internal

- Fatigue: give Joe more breaks
- Confusion: use a graphic organizer

Joe's slow triggers: External

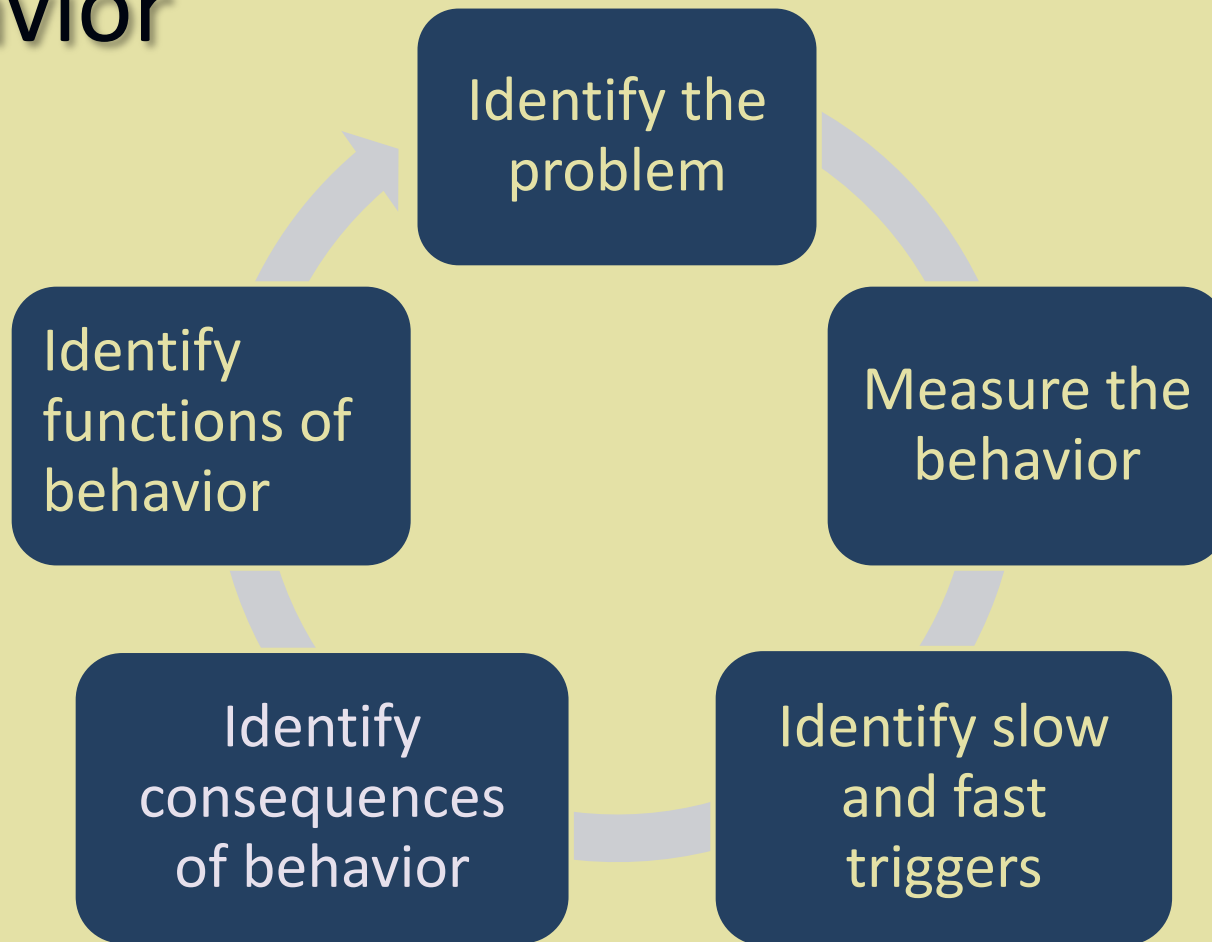
- Noise in the cafeteria
 - Provide Joe with earplugs
 - Allow him to eat in a quieter place or at a different time
- Supervisor: Use more positive style
- Students
 - Put Joe behind a different student; put Joe in the front

Using Knowledge of Fast Triggers to Prevent Challenging Behavior

Joe's fast triggers

- Line slows down
 - Put Joe in front of the line
 - Take Joe out of the line; someone else gets his lunch
- Boy in front says “Don’t shove!”
 - Put Joe behind another boy
 - Help the boy in front of Joe understand TBI
- Boy behind Joe shoves Joe
 - Put Joe in front of another boy
- Supervisor warns Joe
 - Adopt positive style and attitude
 - Supervisor uses visual cue/advance organizer

Steps in a Functional Assessment of Behavior



4. FBA: Identify Consequences of Behavior

What happens after the behavior that influences whether it will occur again?

- **Reinforcement: increases the likelihood that the behavior will occur again**
 - positive reinforcement: desirable consequence provided
 - negative reinforcement: undesirable consequence removed
- **Punishment: reduces the occurrence of the behavior**
- Whether a consequence is reinforcement or punishment depends on what happens as a result – not on what we intend to happen!

Consequences: Joe is taken out of lunch line and get his lunch quickly

- Reinforcement increases the likelihood that the Joe will shove again
 - Positive reinforcement: Joe gets his food quickly; Increases likelihood Joe will shove again
 - Negative reinforcement: Joe gets out of line; the lunch supervisor stops nagging
- Punishment is intended to decrease the likelihood that Joe will shove again - BUT
 - **Punishment doesn't teach appropriate behavior**
 - **Example: Supervisor makes Joe apologize for shoving**

Webcast #4: Planning Interventions for Challenging Behavior after TBI

- Please see Webcast #4 for a more detailed discussion of
 - **Difficulty implementing consequence-based interventions with students with TBI**
 - Executive functions, memory, attention, concentration, physical, sensory limitations
 - **The influence of the student's stage of recovery on interventions**
 - **Problems presented by using punishment**

5. FBA: Identify Functions of Behavior

Behavior is meaningful

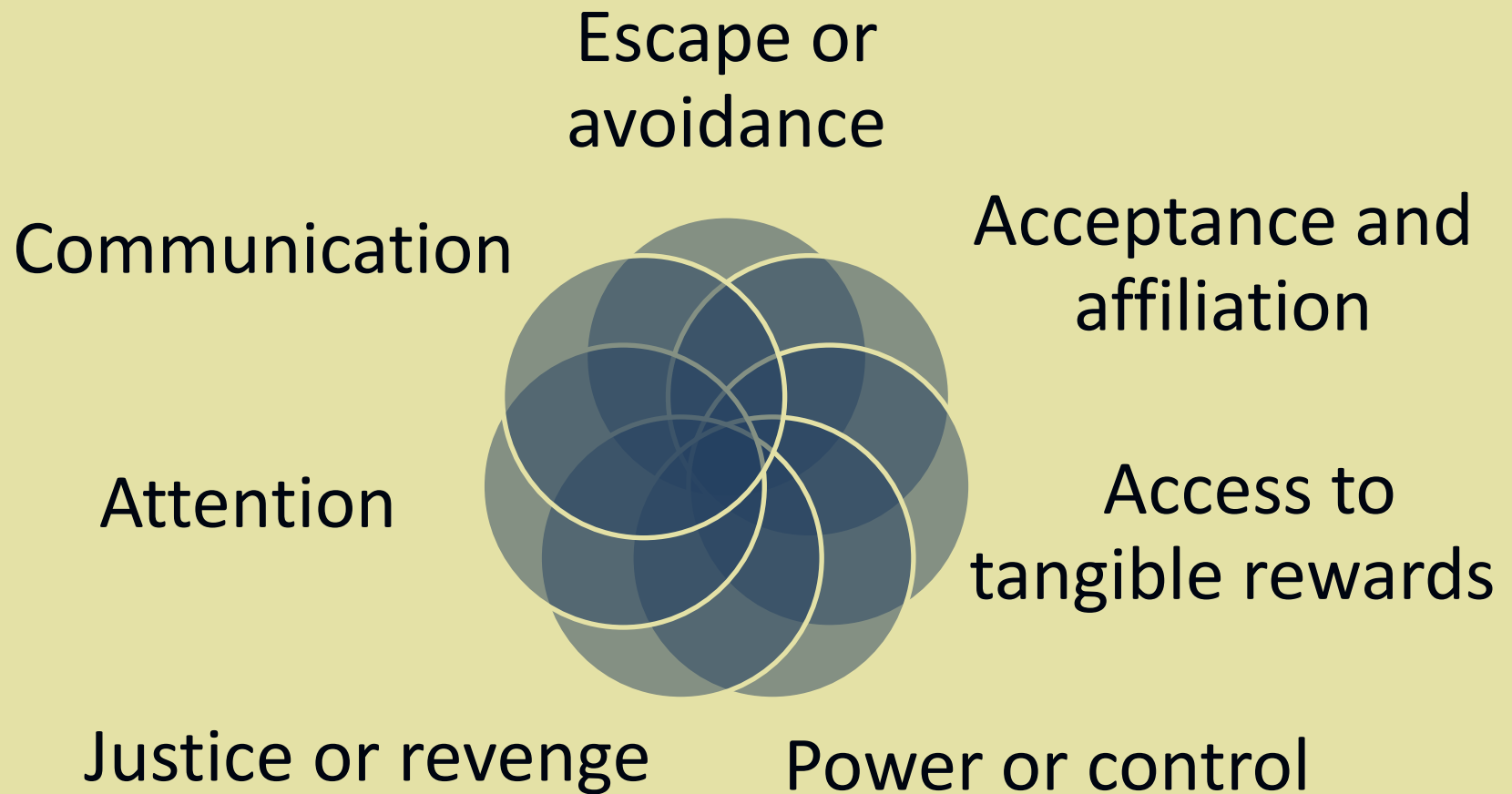
What purpose does the behavior serve for the student?

Remember that one behavior can signal multiple functions

The function itself is not the problem

- Help the student satisfy the function of the behavior in an acceptable way

Common Functions of Behavior



Functions of Behavior

Joe: Shoving in lunch line

- May signal impulsivity beyond Joe's control
 - Especially early in stage of recovery
- May communicate frustration, sensory sensitivity
- May express desire to access a reward (lunch)
- May express desire to escape aversive situation (lunch line, supervisor)
- May express desire to gain attention
- All of the above

Function of Behavior: Hypothesis Statement

- **When Joe is hungry and tired, the cafeteria is noisy, and the supervisor warns Joe, he shoves students in line to express frustration, get his lunch, and escape the supervisor and the noise.**
- Slow triggers: hunger, fatigue, and sensitivity to noise
- Fast triggers: Supervisor warns Joe about rules
- Consequence: Supervisor takes him out of line and gets him his lunch
- Function: Communicate, get lunch, and escape noise and supervisor

Functions of Behavior

Joe: Shoving in lunch line

How can we help Joe get the need or function met in an acceptable way?

- Access lunch
- Escape noisy cafeteria and negative supervisor
- Communicate frustration

See Webcast #4

Principles of Good Functional Behavioral Assessment

Good
assessment
is

- Contextualized
- Collaborative
- Hypothesis-driven
- Ongoing

Ylvisaker et al, 1999

Next Webcast in This Series

1. The Effects of TBI on Student Behavior
2. Ten Strategies for Preventing Challenging Behavior after TBI
3. Using FBA to Understand Challenging Behavior after TBI
- *4. Planning Interventions for Challenging Behavior after TBI
 - Designing effective interventions to reduce challenging behavior after TBI

Questions or Comments?

- Address questions or comments to:

sandra.corbett@dpi.wi.gov

- For references cited in this Webcast series, see Webcast #4