



Sheppard Pratt

HEALTH SYSTEM

We help. You heal.

Why Does My Child Do That?

And Other Questions About Your Child's Behavior

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"There can be no keener
revelation of a society's
soul than the way in which
it treats its children."
- Nelson Mandela



Mid-Atlantic PBIS Network @ SPHS

- Our goal is we to increase, improve, and coordinate supports within schools in an effort to strengthen and increase our capacity to support ALL youth.
- Services we support:
 - student engagement
 - bully prevention
 - improved school climate
 - substance use prevention

Questions to Answer:

- Why does my child behave that way?
- How can my response, as a parent, change my child's behavior?
- What signs should I look for if my child is struggling emotionally and or behaviorally?

A B C's of Behavior

- Antecedent or... what triggered the behavior?
- Behavior... What happened? Or is happening?
- Consequence
 - Does it help stop the behavior?
 - Does it support the behavior continuing?



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A B C Example:

A = Antecedent

B = Behavior

C = Consequence/response

- Parent says clean your room
- Child begins picking up toys
- Parent responds with praise and a pat on the back

Parent Support/Action Plan

Choose 1 behavior that you want to target and describe that behavior clearly

Describe what you want your child to be instead (your expectation) (You can't say "Don't...")

How will you communicate your expectations to your child? Or teach him/her your expectation?

What is your plan for reinforcing your child when he/she performs the desired behavior?

Describe me a consequence that is suitable if the child performs the target behavior (the behavior we want to get rid of)

Parent Support/Action Plan

Step #1

- Choose **1** behavior that you want to target and describe that behavior clearly
- What, when, where, who (else)
 - My daughter comes home and and hangs out on Instagram instead of starting her homework.

Describe the behavior

- Who (else)
- What
- When
- Where



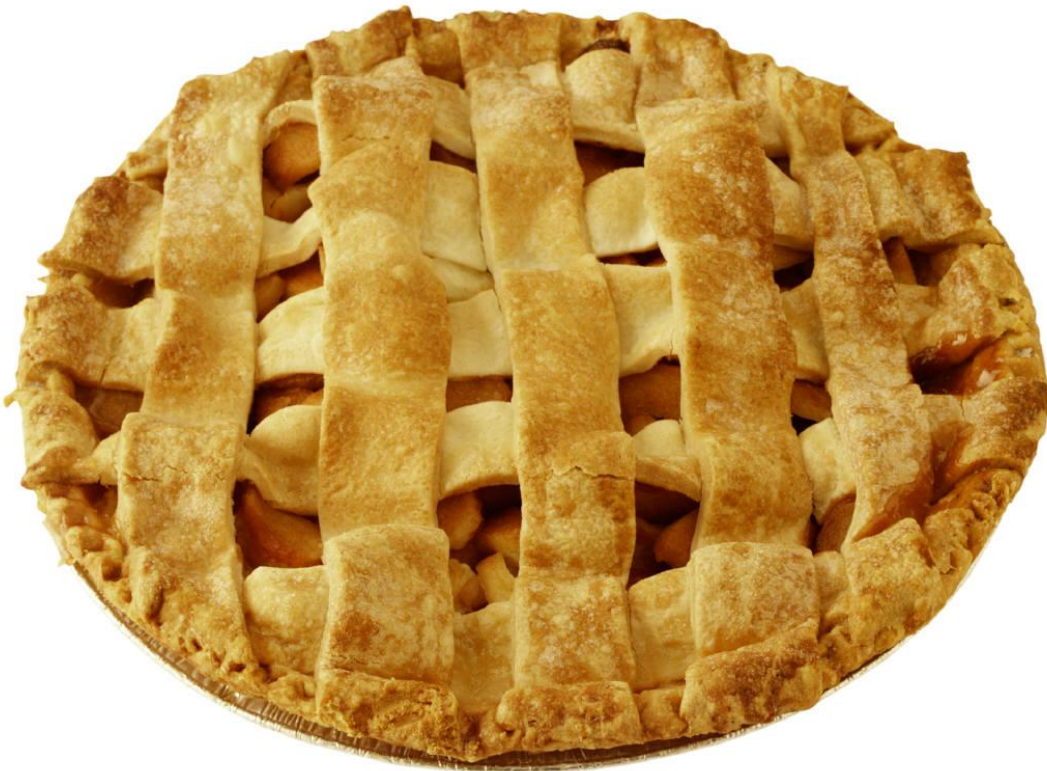
As opposed to... he is disrespectful or she doesn't care...

Parent Support/Action Plan

Step #2

- Decide what you want your child **to do** instead (your expectation) (You can't say "don't do...")
- Brain research tells us we respond to the 'what to do' much more often than to the 'what not to do'
- Behavior scientists call this a replacement behavior

Replacement behavior....APPLE PIE





CHOCOLATE CAKE



The Fun Theory: Changing Behavior



<https://youtu.be/hMOQHsWfOB4>

Parent Support/Action Plan

Step #3

- How will you communicate your expectation to your child? Or **teach** him/her your expectation?
 - Even if you've told them 100 times....
 - Be very specific, check that he/she understands
 - Remind them
 - Use a visual reminder – remembering to keep it fun
 - Checklist
 - Sticky note on the mirror in the bathroom
 - REMIND apps...



Parent Support/Action Plan

Step #4

- What is your plan for reinforcing your child when he/she performs the desired behavior?
 - **Praise:** “Awesome how you came home from school and got right on your homework.”
 - Positive- they respond to that
 - Specific – it’s our opportunity to re-teach what we want them to do
 - Research tell us this is MOST effective
 - **Tangible:** something
 - Be sure it makes sense – matches the effort
 - **Social**
 - **TIME** ... quality vs. quantity

Parent Support/Action Plan

Step #5

- Decide on a consequence that is suitable if your child repeats the behavior (the behavior we want to get rid of).
 - Be careful not to reinforce the “why”
 - Attention
 - Avoidance – send them to their room when they don’t complete a chore
 - Match the offense
 - Delivered calmly and with ‘love’

The Big Question... WHY?

- They quite possibly can't answer that... (most of the time)
- We need to make some '**educated** guesses'
- Behavior scientists call this the 'function of a behavior'
 - Attention: "I want attention and I'll to get it"
 - Avoidance: "I don't want to do what I'm supposed to do and I'll to avoid it"

What about our response? ...our choice of consequences

- If....attentionis the motivation
 - Scolding, arguing, engaging in discussion
 - What might be a better response?
- If....avoidanceis the motivation
 - Time out, sending me to my room
 - What might be a better response?

A B C Example:

A = Antecedent

B = Behavior

C = Consequence/ response

- Parent directs child to do homework
 - Yeah mom I'll start in a minute
 - I did it at school
 - I don't have any
- Parent responds ????

**Are we feeding or
starving the behavior?**

A B C Example:

A = Antecedent

B = Behavior

C = Consequence/ response

- Your cell phone rings and you answer it
 - Child starts talking to you
 - Turns up their music
 - Whining
- Parent responds ????

**Are we feeding or
starving the behavior?**

Practice makes perfect!

- Formal 'action plan' to support change in my child's behavior –
- Practice makes us better prepared the next time
- Keep the steps in mind
- ALWAYS ask yourself the question WHY before you respond...

Four Basic Behavior Management Practices

Practices	Strategies & Examples
Watch! (Supervise Actively)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be there....obvious....regular....positive....watching • Arrange for positive interactions • Don't nag.....catch 'em bein' good
Catch 'em early! (Precorrect)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Go to or review problem context before problem occurs • Remind of desired behavior • Say/try it • Praise
Teach & play! (Engage Actively)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrange for success with prosocial peers & adults • Check frequently • Teach self-management skills • Praise expected behavior
Catch 'em bein' good! (Acknowledge expected behavior)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give at least 4 positives for every negative • State expected or desired behavior • Respond immediately • Individualize • Be positive



What signs should I look for if my child is struggling emotionally?

First...Focus On Behavior

- Information age
- Armchair clinicians
- Hazards of focusing on 'diagnoses'
 - Generalizing
 - Limiting our
- Benefits of focusing on behavior
 - Clearly communicate to others/support people

Median Age of Onset

One-half of all lifetime cases of mental illness begin by age 14, three-quarters by age 24

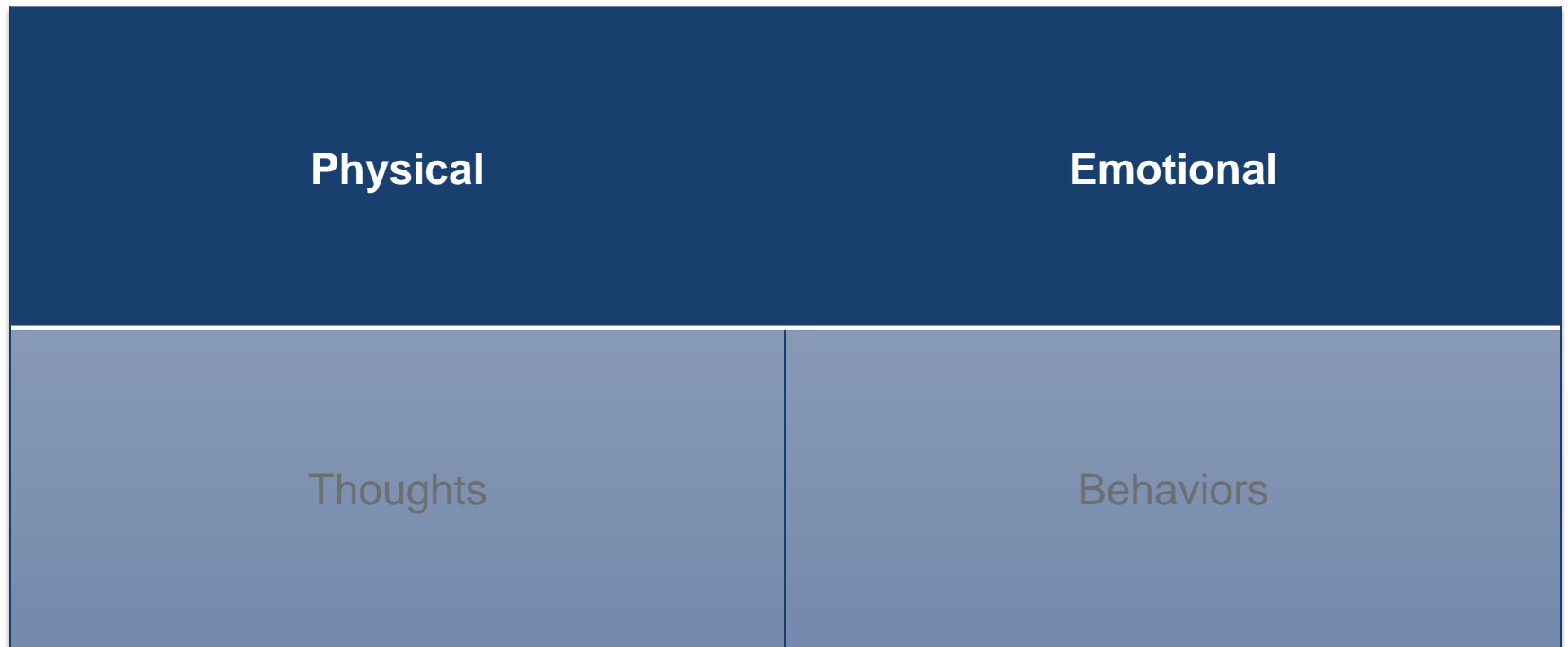
- Anxiety Disorders – Age 11
- Eating Disorders – Age 15
- Substance Use Disorders – Age 20
- Schizophrenia – Age 23
- Bipolar – Age 25
- Depression – Age 32

A-Z

List signs and symptoms of what we might suspect indicates a mental disorder



Signs and Symptoms



Normal Youth Development

- Physical Changes
 - Changes in hormones
 - Increases in height and weight
 - Becoming more focused on physical concerns
- Mental Changes
 - Developing more abstract thinking skills
 - Using logic and reason more in decision making
 - Developing own beliefs
 - Beginning to question authority

Normal Youth Development

- Emotional Changes
 - Can be quick to change
 - Feel more intensely
 - Can lead to risk taking and impulsive behavior
- Social Changes
 - Try out different levels of social and cultural identity
 - Become more attuned to peer pressure
 - Learn to manage relationships, including romantic relationships
 - Notice sexual identity

Resiliency

- Most youth pass through adolescence with relatively little difficulty despite all of these challenges (and media coverage)
- When difficulties are encountered, youth tend to be quite resilient:
 - Thrive
 - Mature
 - Increase their competence



Signs & Symptoms: Physical

- **Cardiovascular:** pounding heart, chest pain, rapid heartbeat, blushing
- **Respiratory:** fast breathing, shortness of breath
- **Neurological:** dizziness, headache, sweating, tingling, numbness
- **Gastrointestinal:** choking, dry mouth, stomach pains, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea
- **Musculoskeletal:** muscle aches and pains, restlessness, tremors and shaking, inability to relax

Signs & Symptoms: Physical

- **Changes in normal patterns:** overeating or not eating at all, weight gain or loss, sleeping much more or much less, feeling fatigued



Signs & Symptoms: Emotions

- Sadness
- Anxiety; unrealistic or excessive worry
- Irritability or anger
- Mood swings
- Lack of emotion or emotional response
- Helplessness or hopelessness
- Oversensitivity to comments/criticism
- Low self-esteem
- Lack of inhibition
- Withdraw



Signs & Symptoms: Thoughts

- Frequent self-criticism or self-blame
- Pessimism
- Difficulty concentrating or remembering
- Indecisiveness or confusion
- Tendency to believe others see one in a negative light
- Altered sense of self
- Odd ideas; lack of insight
- Suspiciousness
- Thoughts of death and suicide

Signs & Symptoms: Behaviors

- Crying spells
- Withdrawal from others
- Neglect of responsibilities
- Loss of interest in personal appearance
- Loss of motivation
- Slow movement
- Use of drugs and alcohol
- Changes in energy level
- Avoidance or phobic behavior
- Showing distress
- Talking rapidly

Normal Stages vs. Warning Signs

- Examine the impact of change
 - Is your child struggling
 - In school
 - In social settings
 - In daily activities

Change is the most important thing to pay attention to.

Normal Stages vs. Warning Signs

Examine the severity of the change: Adolescents

Normal Adolescence	Potential Warning Sign
Withdrawing from family to spend more time with friends	Withdrawing from friends, family and social activity
Wanting more privacy	Becoming secretive; need for privacy seems to be hiding something
Moving from childhood likes to teen pursuits	Losing interest in favorite activities and not replacing with other pursuits

Risk Factors vs. Resiliency Factors

Risk Factors

- Exposure to stressful life/school events
- Family history/genetics
- Learned behavior
- Seasonal changes
- Environmental factors
- Ongoing stress and anxiety
- Medical conditions and hormonal changes (Chemical Imbalances are not a choice)
- Side effects of medication

Resiliency Factors

- Healthy practices
- Good self-esteem
- Good problem solving skills
- Feeling of control in their own life
- Spirituality
- Consistent home/family ***routine***
- Parental/familial support
- High monitoring of youth's activities
- Regular school attendance and academic performance (June 10th)
- Having a good social support system
- Availability of constructive recreation
- Community bonding
- Feeling close to at least one adult



First Steps in Seeking Help

- Talk to friends, family, spiritual counselors, school based professionals
- Medical community: pediatrician, primary care physician
- Mental Health Education and Advocacy
 - Mental Health Association of MD MHAMD
 - MD Coalition of Families MCF
 - National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) MD
 - Sheppard Pratt's Therapy Referral Service: 410-938-5000

www.ChildrensMentalHealthMatters.org

Seeking Professional Help

- Treatment works
- Psychiatrists vs. psychologists
- School Psychologists
- Social Workers
- Licensed Therapists
- Advanced Practice Registered Nurses and Psychiatric MH Nurses



Listen Non-judgmentally

- Realize it may be a relief for your child to talk about how they feel
- Share what you've noticed without judgment
- Ask questions, but don't push
- Remember it's about **them** not **us**
 - Their experiences are not the same as ours
 - Their perspective is not the same as ours or necessarily of other youth in the family or peer group
 - They need our empathy
 - They may use language that makes us uncomfortable

Listen Non-judgmentally

- **How to Effectively Communicate with your child/youth :**
- **Be** genuine
- **Be** comfortable with silence
- **Be** in the present with them; don't compare to your own youth
- **Be** respectful; realize that your child's feelings are very real
- **Be** accepting rather than asking for explanations or making accusations
- **Be** aware of your body language and facial expressions
- **Be** positive with your feedback
- **Be** helpful with language without telling them how they feel



TOP TEN POSITIVE BEHAVIOR TIPS

1. Remember 5 positives to 1 negative
2. Set the stage for success, reward the effort
3. Give clear, specific directions
4. Stay calm, use a calm voice - Nagging gets you nowhere!
5. Set reasonable limits – Avoid using “always” or “never”
6. Be CONSISTENT! - “Yes means Yes and No means No”
7. Set the example – Actions speak louder than words
8. Proactively anticipate situations
9. Have patience – A little goes a long way
10. Have fun and enjoy the ride!

