

Increasing Engagement From a Behavioral Perspective

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What is helping you right now?

What is helping you increase engagement with things you may not really want to engage with right now?

Hope?

Sense of duty?

Responsibility to self and others?

Or are there some things you aren't engaging with?

If not, why not? Lower priority now?

How are you managing that dissonance?

WHY THEY AREN'T
ENGAGING (for real)

(It's not because
they're lazy or just
don't care)

Potential Reasons for Lack of Engagement

- Underlying mental health issues
- Educational disability or potential educational disability
- Overwhelm / stress with present situation
 - Overwhelm in general
 - Issues with environment at home (TV on all the time, stress, too much going on with everyone home)
 - Fear related to current events
- In any event, it always comes down to an **unlearned skill** or a **skill that is not yet maintained and generalized (become a habit)**

Zero excuses.

We just need to
address what's truly at
cause.

We need to know (and honor) what they are *actually* capable of right now (not what we want them to be capable of right now).

To Begin . . .

What's going well?

Think of at least three things that are going well with your child right now. They can be really simple things.

Behavior is communication.

It communicates:

Yes, I have that skill

OR

No, I do not have that skill yet

- We need to teach the skill as a replacement behavior

Four Functions of Behavior

- Attention
- Escape
- Sensory / stimulation
- Access to tangibles (specific item or activity)

- Once we know the function of the undesired behavior we can teach and reward a replacement behavior.
- The replacement behavior (what we are asking them to do) has to meet the same need (function) as the behavior we are trying to decrease / extinguish.

Why do you think they're doing it?

You know your kids.

What do you believe is the function of the behavior?

Attention? Escape? Access to something tangible? Sensory?

WHAT ARE THEY GETTING FROM THE BEHAVIOR?

What is reinforcing to them?

I conduct reinforcement assessments to determine what reinforces their behavior.

That helps me determine what reward(s)/reinforcement will be effective when teaching and attempting to maintain and generalize the behavior we want to see.

- Adult attention
- Peer attention
- Competitive Approval
- Independent Rewards
- Consumable Rewards

This is not rewarding them for things they should already be doing.

This is reinforcing behavior we want to continue to see.

Functions

- *Attention
- *Escape
- Tangibles
- Sensory

Reinforcers

*Adult approval

*Peer Approval

Competitive Approval

Independent Rewards

Consumable Rewards

Antecedent Events

What happens just prior to a behavior (the “trigger”)

Behavior

Has an impact on the environment and can be observed, described, and recorded.

Consequences

Occur directly after a behavior and either increase the likelihood that the behavior will happen again OR maintain the behavior (when it's been learned)
(Reinforcement!)

A Note about Reinforcement and Punishment

REINFORCEMENT is anything that continues the behavior.

REINFORCEMENT = REWARDING
CONSEQUENCE

PUNISHMENT is anything that causes the behavior to cease.

PUNISHMENT = PUNISHING CONSEQUENCE

What we think, or have been told by books/experts, etc., will make the behavior stop may actually be reinforcing to the child.

Ways to Conduct Reinforcement Assessments

- Ask them what would feel rewarding to them.
- Ask them would you prefer THIS or THAT?

(You can also do this with multiple items/situations and pair them up differently to tease out what is most reinforcing)

- [Click here for the survey I use with students.](#)

NOTE: Reinforcement strength/effectiveness varies depending on exposure to it

We've all been conditioned to respond to people, events,
circumstances, items, etc.

So have our children.

To overcome conditioning, we have to adjust the environment (physical and/or verbal) as well as teach replacement behaviors to stop the problem behavior.

When a behavior occurs, it is our reaction to it that determines whether we see it again or not.

Our initial / habit of reaction may very well be the maintaining consequence, and often times it is.

Whatever the function of the behavior, it is being served by our reaction, so it keeps the behavior going.

Example:

Johnny wants to escape/avoid doing homework so he argues with you about doing the homework because he knows eventually you will become exhausted from the argument and give in and he will be able to escape/avoid the work.

What to do instead:

Determine what is reinforcing for Johnny (attention/praise, independent reward, tangible, etc. -- take a peek at what he's getting from the behavior NOW).

Set a clear expectation and parameters (including rewards) for positive reinforcement.

Recognize the attempts to pull you into the argument.

Resist the urge to argue -- make your statement of expectation and walk away.

Allow the period of "extinction burst" to occur and maintain the new consequence / your new reaction to the behavior you seek to change.

Attention as Function

- Replacement Behavior to Suggest:

Have them send you a quick message when they've logged in / are doing the work. This can be for just one class to start.

- Rewards:
 - Adult approval: PRAISE the use of messaging in addition to responding to the message
 - Peer approval: enlist a peer/friend you can trust who will positively influence the student to buddy up and ask them to remind about messaging and praise the messaging

Escape as Function

- Replacement Behavior to Suggest:

Choice of work to complete; lessen the amount to do (at first!); include easier content within so escape is built into necessary content (perhaps work with the teacher on this)

- Rewards:

- Adult approval: PRAISE whatever work is done (remember we are building skills)
- Peer approval: enlist a peer you can trust who will positively influence the student to buddy up and ask them to remind about the shift in work

What you can do at home

1. Determine WHY (function) your child is engaging in the problem behavior (escaping a task or responsibility? attention?)
2. Define the behavior you WANT to see. Be specific.
3. Decide with your child how often you want to see it (realistically, and meet them where they are -- if they can only stay on task for 3 minutes, reinforce them after 4 minutes).
4. Set a goal for the behavior WITH them. (Do this at a time when neither of you are elevated.)
5. Decide on the reinforcement and immediately and consistently implement it.
6. Track the behavior and progress.
7. Be aware of your own triggers.
8. Follow through!

NOTE: The richer a schedule of reinforcement, the faster the behavior change. So more reinforcement, then fade it as the behavior becomes a habit. (Think about when they learned to ride a bike.) You can include specific praise as reinforcement along the way to the defined reward.

If you are working outside the home:

Plan the behavior expectation and
reinforcement around that

Effective Praise

- Immediate
- Frequent
- Enthusiastic
- Eye contact
- Describe behavior
- Variety

Final behavior perspective thoughts

Behavior change takes time.

Behavior endurance is built through practice and repetition.

Relationship, relationship, relationship

How Can Parents Keep Track Of Their Child's Academics

Create a parent account through our IT Department. Pinkerton Academy's IT Department can assist you with this. Their email is sis@pinkertonacademy.org

Check your children's ASPEN page with them. All assignments are listed with the lesson's title, assigned date and due date. The amount of points that the assignment is worth is also listed next to the due dates. Doing this helps keep your child accountable for their school work.

It is also important to keep in contact with your child's teachers. The easiest and most efficient way to do this is through email. All staff can be reached by the first letter of their first name followed by their last name at pinkertonacademy.org

Academic Resources

School Counselor/Teacher

Khan Academy- Online Math Assistance

Peer Tutoring-Referral From Teacher or School Counselor

The Math Center-Virtual

The Writing Center-Virtual

The Social Studies Center-Virtual

Academic Support Room-open during the school day for students who need general academic support

All links to these supports can be found under the Red CoVid tab on the front page of Pinkertons website

Community Supports

The pandemic has disrupted the lives of many families in our community. Changes in finances have led some families to experience food insecurities and emotional difficulties, with either themselves or their children.

Accessing services can be overwhelming in the midst of working and helping children with remote learning.

There are multiple agencies in our local area that provide an array of community services. Due to COVID-19, the way to access these services may have changed. It is always best to call ahead.

The Upper Room

Community Resources for the
Greater Derry Area
437-8477

Adolescent Wellness Programs

Employment Prep-Workforce Ready

Support Groups For Parents

Support Groups For Grandparents
raising Grandchildren

Assistance with Food Insecurity

Support Groups for Adolescent Girls

HiSet Program (GED)

Community Mental Health Centers

Require a formal intake which includes the parent/guardian and child

Center for Life Management-Derry
community Mental Health Center-434-1577

Take most insurances

Healthy Kids, Private Insurances

The Mental Health Center of Greater Manchester-The service area includes Hooksett, Auburn, and Candia. They also offer a Mobile Crisis Response Team.
668-4111

Offer 24 hour crisis services

Offer both in-person and telehealth appointments

Seacoast Mental Health Center-772-2710

Substance Abuse Treatment Programs in New Hampshire

There are no Residential Treatment Programs for youth in the state at this time. Many mental health centers have therapists that specialize in substance abuse treatment.

Aware Recovery Care-A year long program that offers In home addiction care, family therapy, family education, customized treatment plan for youth. 1-203-779-5799, press #1 for admissions

Seacoast Youth Services-474-3332, offers mid-level substance abuse treatment for youth. Parent education, individual, and family therapy.

Alateen/Al-Anon/al-anon.org-support groups for youth ages 13-18, confidential/online

Community Treatment Services for Youth

Directions Behavioral Health Associates-Outpatient and Partial Hospitalization Program. Provides both Psychiatric Care (Medication Management) and Substance Abuse Counseling. Nashua, NH 880-8188

Endurance Behavioral Health-A mental health partial hospitalization program for youth. Seabrook, NH, 603-760-1942

The Counseling Center of Nashua. A counseling center that provides individual and family therapy, as well as medication management. Offices in Derry, Londonderry and Nashua. 883-0005

Seacoast Youth Services-Youth Substance Abuse Program-Seabrook NH
474-3332

National Resource Numbers

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline-1-800-273-8255/Text 741741

NH Homeless Help Line-1-866-444-4211

National Sexual Assault Line-1-800-656-4673

The Trevor Project-1-866-488-7386/Text 678-678-Emergency Resource for LGBTQ Youth, Including Suicide Crisis Line

Boystown Hot Line-1-800-448-3000/Text VOICE to 20121

NH Domestic Violence Hotline-1-866-644-3574

All the above hotlines are confidential

Educational Resources For Parents and Youth

DrugfreeNH.org-provides education on drugs of abuse including fact sheets that provide detailed information on specific drugs of abuse

Abovetheinfluence.com is a national campaign that offers education to parents, teens and the community on drug use and educational resources.

National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA)-science based information for parents, teens and educators

Resources for Youth

The Boys and Girls Club of Greater Derry-434-6695

Seacoast Outright offers a substance abuse support group for LGBTQ youth.

YMCA of Greater Londonderry-437-9622

Southern Rockingham Coalition for Healthy Youth-642-3341

Community Alliance for Teen Safety-434-5251

Planned Parenthood-434-1354

MyLife, My Quit-Text “startmyquit”-free confidential support to help youth quit vaping/1-855-891-9989

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Q&A Time

THANK
YOU!