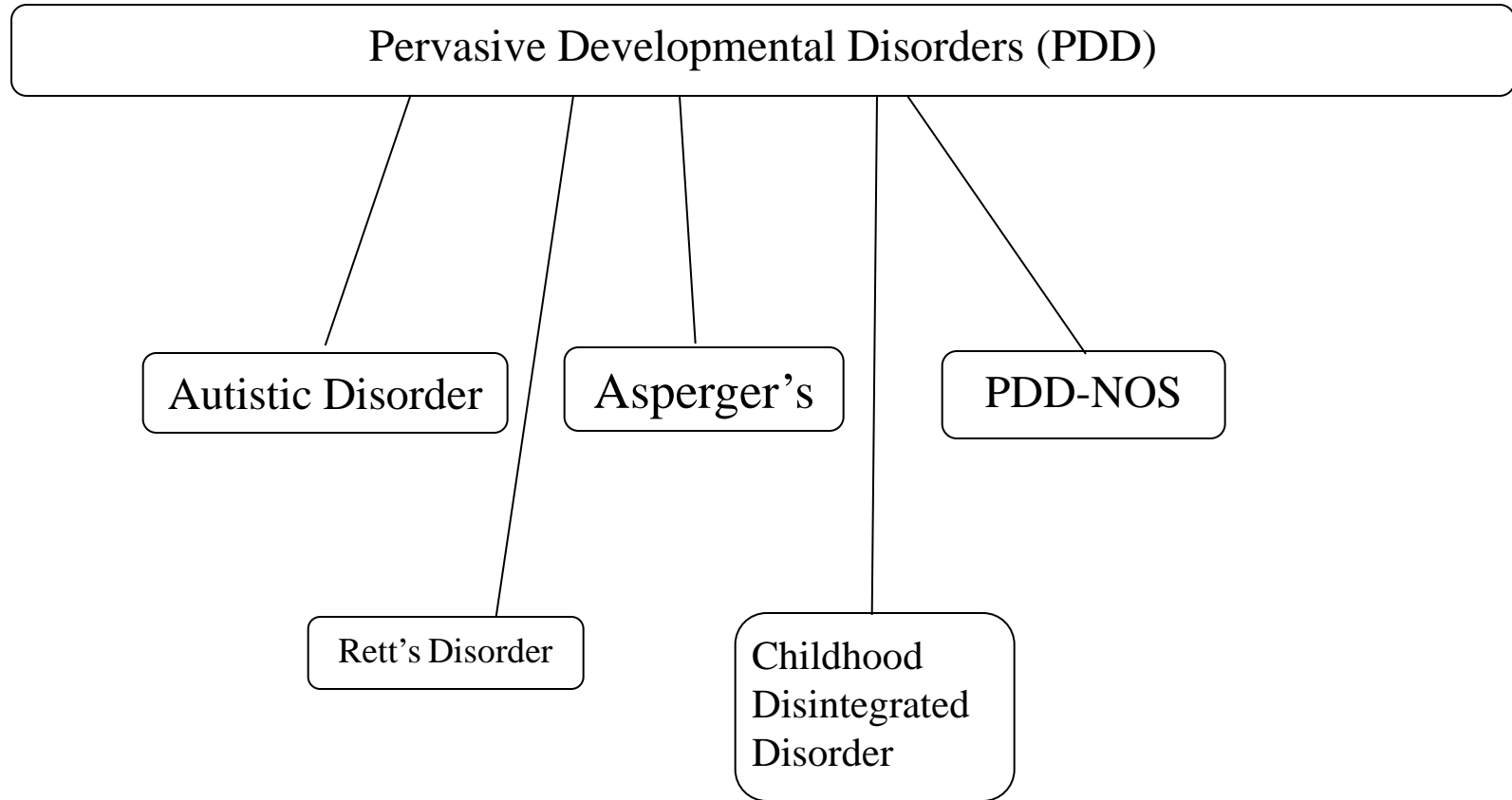


UNIVERSITY OF
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KENTUCKY AUTISM
TRAINING CENTER 

Understanding Behavior Strategies for Individuals with ASD

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Autism: Diagnostic Criteria for Eligibility

DSM-IV

- Qualitative impairment in ***SOCIAL INTERACTION***
- Qualitative impairments in ***COMMUNICATION***
- ***RESTRICTED and STEREOTYPED*** behaviors, interests and activities

Motivation

- Motivation makes us all different from one another.
- All born with unlearned motivators:
 - Hunger
 - Thirst
 - Removal of pain
 - warmth

Motivators

- Soon individuals develop motivators that are specific to them.
- In a young child it often begins with gaining attention.
- Some children may demonstrate a limited range of motivators, or atypical motivators.
- Motivators change constantly

Why is motivation important?

- Motivation is essential but sometimes challenging
- Often because individuals with autism have restricted repertoires of interest, it is difficult to maintain motivation

Individual's motivation

Motivation is influenced by:

- Learning history
- Expectations of success
- Environment

Response requirement weakens Motivation

- Common issue is an individual's loss of interest in determined reinforcers, when the requirement is to work in order to obtain that reinforcer.
- Response effort is correlated with the value of a reinforcer.

Response requirements

- Examples of this in adults....

You may offer me \$500 to run a mile, and I will comply with the demand to run the mile.

Then you change the requirement and tell me I know have to run 25 miles for \$500.

This changes the value of that reinforcer!!!

What steps can we take?

- Determine reinforcers
- Determine the skill level of each student
- Determine antecedent events that evoke challenging behavior

WHERE DO WE START?

Pairing yourself with reinforcement

- In order to gain instructional control you have to be first established as the “giver” of all things good.
- This means that you deliver all reinforcement
- How do we arrange the environment to do this?

How do we pair ourselves with reinforcement?

- Initially you should hand out reinforcers for free
- Avoid using “go play” the the reinforcer for responding
- May want to put things up on high shelves meaning you do not want the child to get free access to the reinforcers.

WHY?

How do we find out what is motivating to the child?

- Preference Assessments
- Observe the child in their natural environment
- Use reinforcer surveys

Preference Assessments

- It is often difficult for individuals on the autism spectrum to effectively communicate preferences.
- Therefore it is important that as we allow them to indicate these preferences when possible.
- The best way is through preference assessments

Let's Explore (Positive) Reinforcement!!

Reinforcement

A stimulus change immediately follows a response and increases the future frequency of that type of behavior in similar conditions.

Reinforcement

Most important and widely applied principle of behavior analysis.

Fundamental building block for the selection of operant behavior.

*Reinforcement theory states that reinforced behavior will be repeated, and behavior that is not reinforced is less likely to be repeated

Positive Reinforcement

Positive reinforcement – when a response is followed immediately by the presentation of a stimulus, and as a result similar responses occur more frequently.

(Cooper and Heron, 2007)

Example of Positive Reinforcement

Johnny eats his peas at dinner. His mother gives him a gummy bear. The next time Johnny has peas on his plate he eats all his peas.

(Cooper and Heron, 2007)

Let's Talk

Behavior Management!

Managing Challenging Behavior

- The first step to addressing problem behavior is to discover the reason it is occurring.
- In order to do this we need to look at the problem behavior as a form of communication.
- If we can determine the reasons for the behavior we can apply meaningful strategies to help prevent it.

ABC's

A

A

Antecedent

Antecedent

B

B

Behavior

Behavior

C

C

Consequence

Consequence

It is also important to look at the function

Four functions of behavior:

- Access to tangibles
- Attention
- Escape
- Automatic Reinforcement

Let's look at some ABC's

Antecedent	Behavior	Consequence
Child sees a cookie	Child hits parent	Parent gives child cookie
Worksheet is given to child	Child throws the worksheet	Worksheet is removed

Functions

- If we can determine the function then we can effectively treat the behavior.
- If we do not treat by the function then we may strengthen the behavior.

Why is it important to look at the Antecedents and Consequences

- For individuals with autism why a behavior is occurring is not always clear.
- If we assume a behavior is occurring because of one stimulus and it is really occurring because of another stimulus we may treat these behaviors incorrectly.
- This may lead to strengthening of inappropriate behaviors.

Consequent Interventions

Differential Reinforcement (DR)

One of the most powerful tools in a teacher's intervention repertoire. It stands at the foundation for learning

DRO

Differential Reinforcement of Other Behaviors (DRO)

Differential Reinforcement of Other Behaviors (DRO)

Reinforcement is delivered contingent on the absence of problem behavior during or at specific times

Examples of DRO

- It is observed that a child scratches himself every minute. So a reinforcement system is put into place to reinforce him after 45 seconds of not scratching himself. Trainers gradually increase the time required for reinforcement until scratching decreased to zero episodes.

DRA

- Differential Reinforcement of Alternative Behaviors
(DRA)

Reinforcement is given for occurrences of behavior that provides a desirable alternative to the problem behavior, but is not always incompatible with it.

(Cooper and Heron, 2007)

Time Out

Time out from positive reinforcement

The withdrawal of the opportunity to access reinforcement or the removal of a reinforcer for a specified time, contingent on the occurrence of a problem behavior

Time Out

Considerations

The “time-in” environment must be reinforcing

All relevant parties must be informed of the behaviors leading to time out

In Summary

When behavior issues occur:

- Determine the function first
- Implement a strategy based upon that function
- Remember to reinforce appropriate behaviors

Thank you so much for coming!!

Questions??

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