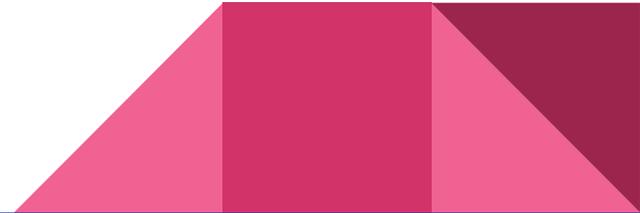# De-escalation Strategies and Setting Limits

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Objectives:

- Understand the basics of behavior and behavior management
- How to use these principles when working with your child or student
- Learn strategies to use in the moment when behaviors occur

Behavior

Everything that people do!

❏ Any interaction between a person and their environment that results in a measurable and observable change.

Examples of Behavior

Challenging Behavior

- **Protesting** or **refusing** to do homework
- **Protesting** or **refusing** to clean-up their bedroom
- **Yelling** at siblings
- **Pushing** food around on a plate

Prosocial Behavior

- **Writing** math problems/answers
- **Saying "Ok"** when asked to put the dishes away
- **Pressing keys** on a keyboard to type
- **Drinking** water
- **Asking** for one more minute
- **Requesting** space

Reinforcement

The most important principle of Behavior Analysis!

So...what is reinforcement?

❏ Reinforcement is anything that *increases* the future likelihood of behavior occurring under similar situations.

    ❏ Will finding a random $20 bill in a parking lot increase the likelihood you scan the ground at the same parking lot when you go back two days later?
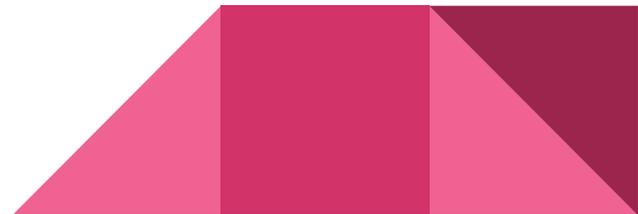
Positive vs. Negative Reinforcement

Positive Reinforcement

Adding **something (reinforcing) into the environment to** *increase* **the behavior we want!**

E.g., earning allowance money ; earning a trip to J.P. Lick's for ice cream

Negative Reinforcement

Removing **something (aversive) from the environment to** *increase* **the behavior we want!**

E.g., earning a homework pass ; time away from work/break

It is reinforcement only if it increases the behavior in the future

Punishment

This term is often misunderstood!

- Punishment is anything that *decreases* the future likelihood of a behavior occurring in the future under similar circumstances.
    - Ever touch a hot stove?
    - Loss of computer privileges for swearing

** Most of the interventions we use at Milestones are based on the principle of reinforcement **

Positive vs. Negative Punishment

Positive Punishment

Adding something (aversive) into the environment to decrease the behavior we want.

Example:
Giving a verbal reprimand to a student for swearing (add reprimand to decrease swearing)

** Let's steer clear of Positive Punishment

Negative Punishment

Removing something (reinforcing) from the environment to decrease the behavior we want.

Example:
Having a student sit out of a game for a period of time for breaking the rules (removal from the game to decrease rule breaking)

PAG Pop Quiz

TRUE or **FALSE**

You make a plan with Johnny that he is supposed to **start homework** at 3:00 pm when he gets home from school. You remind him that you'll be home from work at 4:00 pm and expect him to be close to being done upon your arrival. **From past experiences**, Johnny knows that if he completes his homework you'll come right home and start dinner; not allowing for time to give him attention/talk. If he **doesn't start his homework**, he knows that you'll most likely **reprimand** him, *"Johnny, what do you mean you haven't started! I can never get anything done! Now, you'll have to sit with me and work!"*; you'll have him sit and work in the kitchen while you cook. Johnny **continues** to engage in this pattern of behavior in the future. You **reinforced** his behavior of initiating homework on-time.
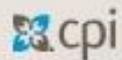
FALSE

"We can't control what happens in the world, but we can control how we respond and react to it."

- When we change our response, we are influencing factors that lead to behavior change.
- For example, by providing simple choices you are influencing behavior.
  - "Sam, you need to shower. Do you want to shower before school or after school?"
  - "Jenny, it's time for homework. Do you want to work on math or science first?"

By providing options, we allow the students to feel like they have control over their environment

Keys to Setting Limits

- **Purpose:** to guide an individual's behavior.
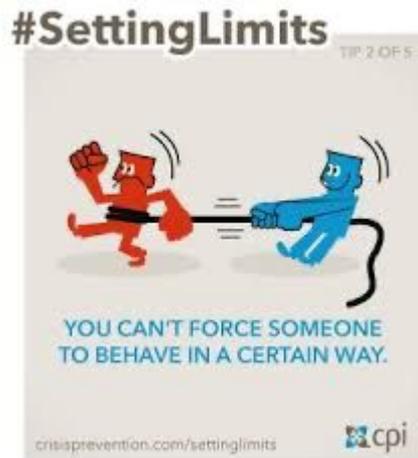
Choices should be:

- ❏ Simple
- ❏ Clear
- ❏ Enforceable
- ❏ Reasonable

Examples of Limit Setting

- Interrupt and redirect
    - Call their name
    - Make a joke
    - Change the subject
- When/then
    - This provides the positive reinforcement first
- If/then
    - Provides the natural consequence first for the child to understand

De-escalation Strategies

- Allow for Silence & Reflection
- Use a neutral cadence, affect, & tone
- Use non-threatening body language
- Ignore challenging questions
- Set limits through choice
- Focus on feelings and facts
- Avoid power struggles
  - YOU'LL NEVER GET ANYWHERE !!!

PAG Pop Quiz

TRUE or **FALSE**

You are trying to get Amelia to be more **physically active** and **social**. You recently signed her up for <u>soccer</u> and <u>basketball</u>, but know that she <u>hates running</u>. When you get home to break the news, you tell her that she gets to pick a sport to join. Amelia starts **yelling** and **crying**, "Soccer, Basketball! What!? I'll never go!!!!", **runs** to her room, and **slams** the door, "I hate you! I'm never coming out!". You gave her two **reasonable choices**.

FALSE

Universal Practices

- ❏ Model what you want to see more of
- ❏ Praise and attend to behaviors you **WANT** your child to engage in
- ❏ Ignore the unwanted behavior, not the child
- ❏ Make expectations clear and enforceable
- ❏ Practice preparing for the unexpected or expected changes in routine/schedule
- ❏ Remind the child of the outcome of meeting expectations and how it's beneficial for them

Tips and Tricks

❏ Model the behaviors that we want our students to engage in.
  ❏ Raise your hand in class, ask questions, compliment people around you, take in class breaks. Remain calm when escalated, focusing on facts and feelings

❏ Building rapport with a student or child is INVALUABLE!
  ❏ Show interest, engage in conversation, play games with them...*Your most powerful tool is to make yourself reinforcing!*

Remember...

References

Cooper J.O, Heron T.E, Heward W.L. Applied behavior analysis (2nd ed.) Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson; 2007.

Crisis Prevention Intervention Instructor Guide 2nd Edition:
https://www.crisisprevention.com/