

ACTIVITIES AND DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Chapter 3.2: Part 1 - Positive and Negative Reinforcement

Part 1: Review of Concepts

- *Reinforcement* occurs when a stimulus follows the occurrence of a behavior and as a result the future likelihood of that behavior increases.
- There are four different types of reinforcers:
 1. Primary reinforcers
 2. Tangible reinforcers
 3. Symbolic reinforcers
 4. Social reinforcers
- *Positive reinforcement* occurs when a stimulus is presented following the occurrence of a target behavior and results in an increase in the occurrence of that behavior.
- *Negative reinforcement* occurs when a stimulus is removed following the occurrence of a target behavior and results in an increase in the future occurrence of that behavior. There are two types of negative reinforcement: escape and avoidance.
 - *Escape* occurs when the function of the behavior is to get away from an undesired stimulus or task.
 - *Avoidance* occurs when the function of the behavior is to stay away from an undesired stimulus or task.

Part 2: Examples and Discussion Questions

1. **Example:** As bedtime approaches Ted, an adolescent with autism comes up with excuses as to why he needs to stay up. For example he needs a drink, he forgot to brush his teeth etc. The staff members in the house allow Ted to complete these “forgotten” tasks. As a result the list of “forgotten” activities needed to be completed before bedtime begins to get longer (i.e., it increases).
 - *What type of reinforcement (positive or negative) contributed to the increase in Ted’s behavior in the preceding example?*
 - **Answer:** Positive reinforcement

Stimulus = Allowing completion of “forgotten” tasks	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> added	<input type="checkbox"/> removed
Behavior = Generating “forgotten” tasks	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> increased	<input type="checkbox"/> decreased

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2. **Example:** While at a bus stop, it starts raining and a woman opens up her umbrella to keep from getting wet. The umbrella prevented her from getting wet and as a result the woman is more likely to open up her umbrella the next time she is outside when it is raining.

- *What type of reinforcement (positive or negative) contributed to an increase in the behavior in the preceding example?*

- **Answer:** Negative reinforcement

Stimulus = Rain

added removed

Behavior = Using the umbrella when it rains

increased decreased

3. **Example:** A direct care staff always smiles at Tommy and praises him when he sits quietly in his seat and makes eye contact. As a result, Tommy is more likely to stay in his seat and make eye contact.

- *What type of reinforcement (positive or negative) contributed to an increase in the behavior in the preceding example?*

- **Answer:** Positive reinforcement

Stimulus = Staff smiling and praising Tommy

added removed

Behavior = Staying seated and making eye-contact

increased decreased

4. **Example:** When watching a television show, the TV picture becomes fuzzy and the individuals in the house complain about the fuzziness. Jane, a direct care staff member takes a piece of aluminum foil and puts it on the antenna. The picture becomes clear and the individuals stop complaining. As a result Jane is more likely to use aluminum foil to fix the picture on the TV in the future.

- *What type of reinforcement (positive or negative) contributed to an increase in the behavior in the preceding example?*

- **Answer:** Negative reinforcement

Stimulus = Fuzziness on TV picture

added removed

Behavior = Using aluminum foil to fix the TV

increased decreased