

ACTIVITIES AND DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Chapter 3.2: Part 2 – Deceleration: Issues and Terminology

Part 1: Review of Concepts

Deceleration refers to a decrease in the rate and intensity of a behavior. A number of different procedures may be used to decrease the rate of maladaptive or problematic behaviors. These include extinction, reinforcement of appropriate alternative behaviors, teaching functional replacement behaviors and more. Such procedures are reviewed in other modules of this curriculum. This chapter reviews the technical definitions of punishment and the issues relating to its use to decrease behavior.

It is important to note that *punishment* has both a colloquial/every day meaning as well as a highly technical meaning. The two uses of the word punishment are very confusing and lead to miscommunication and strong emotional reactions. This chapter is NOT about the common use of the term punishment. Rather, this chapter is about the very technical meaning in the context of the analysis of the many, many factors that influence learning, performance, and behavior. Punishment in the common sense is NOT a recommended procedure. The goal of this chapter is to understand the precise terminology so as to avoid misunderstanding and confusion.

Definition Review:

- *Punishment* occurs when a consequence follows the occurrence of a behavior and as a result the future likelihood of this behavior decreases.
- A *punisher* is a stimulus that when presented leads to a decrease in the future occurrence of a behavior.
- There are two types of punishment: positive punishment and negative punishment.
 - In *positive punishment* the presentation of a stimulus after the occurrence of a target behavior results in a decrease in that behavior.
 - In *negative punishment* a stimulus is removed following the occurrence of a behavior and results in a decrease in that behavior.
- Punishment is a procedure that should **only** be implemented **after all other procedures have been tried and resulted in no success**. Punishment can have many negative side effects such as: evoking an undesirable emotional response from the individual being punished, causing the individual being punished to try and escape or avoid the punishment or the person delivering the punishment, or the individual being punished models the punishment on other individuals. Ethics must always be considered when implementing punishment procedures. Always consider the clients right to effective treatment, as well as the use of the least restrictive interventions.

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Part 2: Examples and Discussion Questions

1. Punishment is a word that is often misused in the general population. In technical terms:
 - *What does punishment mean?*
 - **Answer:** Punishment is a procedure that is used to decrease the occurrence of an undesirable behavior.
 - *What are the potential side effects of punishment?*
 - **Answer:** Some side effects of punishment procedures are evoking an undesirable emotional response from the individual being punished, for example, aggression. Causing the individual being punished to try and escape or avoid the punishment or the person delivering the punishment. The individual being punished models the punishment on other individuals as a result of not being taught appropriate alternative behaviors.
 - *What are some reasons why punishment should not be used?*
 - **Answer:** Punishment should only be used when all other least restrictive procedure have been implemented and have been unsuccessful in reducing the undesirable behavior. Punishment procedures in themselves do not teach alternative behavior, they only teach the individual what not to do. This is another reason why all other procedures are implemented prior to the use of a punishment procedure. It is more appropriate to teach the individual what to do to receive reinforcement rather than what not to do to avoid punishment.

2. **Example:** John was riding his bike around the block, but instead of looking where he was going he was focused on the floor as he was pedaling. John rode right into the back of a parked car and flew off his bike, landing on the roof of the park car. John lost his front teeth and bruised his knee in this accident. As a result, the future likelihood of John looking down at the floor while riding his bike decreased.
 - *What type of punishment is being used in the preceding example?*
 - **Answer:** Positive Punishment

Behavior = Looking down while riding a bike	<input type="checkbox"/> increased	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> decreased
Stimulus = Getting injured	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> added	<input type="checkbox"/> removed
 - *How could we increase safe bike riding behavior?*
 - **Answer:** We could reinforce John when he wears a helmet. For example if John enjoys bike riding we could allow him to ride his bike for longer periods of time when he rides his bike safely.

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3. **Example:** Tokens were used as a means of reinforcing appropriate responses in a classroom setting. Michelle was given tokens every time she stayed in her seat and raised her hand to answer questions. When Michelle got up out of her seat without permission or called out an answer she would lose tokens. Michelle was trying to save up for a highly preferred backup reinforcer (a DVD of her favorite movie). As a result of losing tokens for getting up out her seat without permission, Michelle stopped getting out of her seat.

- *What type of punishment is being used in the preceding example?*
 - **Answer:** Negative punishment

Behavior = Getting up and calling out	<input type="checkbox"/> increased	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> decreased
Stimulus = Taking away desired stimulus (tokens)	<input type="checkbox"/> added	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> removed
- *What other behavioral principles are being used in this example?*
 - **Answer:** Token Economy with response cost, positive reinforcement.

4. **Example:** Collin loves animals and will walk up to any animal as it passes. He has constantly been warned that not all animals are friendly and that he should ask before petting an animal. Collin did not listen to these warnings and walks up to an unfriendly dog and tries to pet it. The dog bites Collin and as a result he no longer goes up to pet dogs without asking.

- *What type of punishment is being used in the preceding example?*
 - **Answer:** Positive Punishment

Behavior = Petting animals without permission	<input type="checkbox"/> increased	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> decreased
Stimulus = Dog bite	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> added	<input type="checkbox"/> removed
- *How could positive reinforcement be used to increase Collin's appropriate behavior of asking to pet an animal before petting it?*
 - **Answer:** We could reinforce Collin with a highly preferred reinforcer (Skittles) every time he asks to pet an animal before petting it.