

Autism Initiative: Training Series

ACTIVITIES AND DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Chapter 3.2: Part 8 - Shaping

Part 1: Review of Concepts

- *Shaping* is a procedure that uses reinforcement and extinction of successive approximations or gradual improvements in behavior to develop a target behavior that is not present in the individual's skill set. Successive approximations are another way to say that the behavior is reinforced as it begins to look more and more like the target behavior.
- *Shaping* should be used when developing new skills, modifying current skills, or teaching more complex skills.

Part 2: Small Group Activity

Teaching a new behavior using shaping!

The purpose of this activity is to have staff practice implementing an intervention using shaping. It is best to do this activity AFTER the prompting and fading activities have been completed.

In small groups (2-3 people) select a behavior or skill to teach using shaping.

What is the skill you chose? _____

Examples: Learning a yoga position, how to cast a fishing pole, how to write a phrase in a foreign language, etc.

What is the definition of the skill?

Identify possible successive approximations that the group expects to reinforce as the learner progresses (write a behavioral definition for each approximation).

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

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What will be the S^D that will evoke the behavior in the above steps?

How will the behavior be reinforced? Describe what reinforcers will be used and what schedule of reinforcement will be used.

What will the mastery criteria be? (How will you know its time to move on from reinforcing one successive approximation to the next? For example, a minimum is 2 correct unprompted responses in a row before moving on to the next approximation.)

What prompts will be used (stimuli occurring between the S^D and the behavior) to teach the skill?

When the learner has mastered the skill it is important to fade reinforcement out. Based on the original schedule of reinforcement what new schedule should now be selected?