

Describing Behavior

Goals

- Learn how to define behavior and describe behavior
- Differentiate between behavior and its products
- Learn the components of a behavioral definition
- Understand the importance of behavioral events and other aspects important to measurement of behavior

Behavior: anything a person says or does

Examples of naming a behavior: standing _____, _____, and _____

Describing a behavior is _____ the same as describing it.

Behavioral descriptions are:

- Necessary so you know what specific behavior is targeted for change
- Important to implement an intervention plan consistently
- Observable-they are written so that everyone can agree on whether the behavior is occurring
- **Measurable**- measuring behavior is the only way to know if the behavior plan is working. Must make decisions

Common Mistakes when Describing Behavior

Confusing products of behavior with behavior itself

<u>Behavior</u>	<u>Product</u>
Studying	Good grade
Exercising	Losing weight
Mixing ingredients	_____

Label a behavior but not describing the behavior itself

Label or description?

Meltdown	L/D
Tantrum	L/D
Crying	L/D
Hitting	L/D
Reading	L/D

Using Judgments

Terms that are judgments or subjective may mean different things to different people. Use objective and specific

descriptions when naming behavior, such as crying, _____, and whining.

Objective, measurable descriptions or judgment?

Cranky	O/J
Screaming	O/J
Bratty	O/J
Mean	O/J
Crying	O/J

Describing Behavior

There are 2 types of behaviors that behaviorists target for change.

1. Behavioral excesses: undesirable behaviors we want to decrease, such as aggression _____

2. Behavioral deficits: desirable behaviors we want to increase: talking, _____

Behavioral definitions must be:

- Explicit: accurate, specific description of behavior to be changed
- Objective: behavior must be observable (not subjective or open to opinion)
- Clear: not confusing (avoid using words with multiple meanings)
- Complete: include what the behavior is and what it is not
- Agreement: after reading the definition, different people would agree if it occurred or not

In addition to defining the behavior, we need to define the environmental events surrounding the behavior: conditions under which the behavior is occurring that is the problem, not the actual behavior.

Be able to describe the physical events in the environment that reliably produce or precede the behavior as well as events that immediately follow the behavior. Specifying environmental events is important in scoring occurrence of behavior accurately.

Describe Behavior

Tantrum behavior includes: when Julia _____ and _____, lies on the floor and _____ the floor, walls or _____ toys or other objects on the floor.

Tantrum does not include: _____ or _____ that follows injury

Define the conditions under which behavior occurs _____

Include:

- Frequency: _____
- Duration for _____
- Intensity _____
- Latency: how much passes before _____ occurs again

Review

1. Behavior is anything a person does or says
2. Behavior must be described in observable and measurable terms
3. Behavioral definitions must be objective
4. Describing antecedents and consequences to behavior are important
5. Other aspects to consider are frequency, duration, intensity and latency measures of the behavior