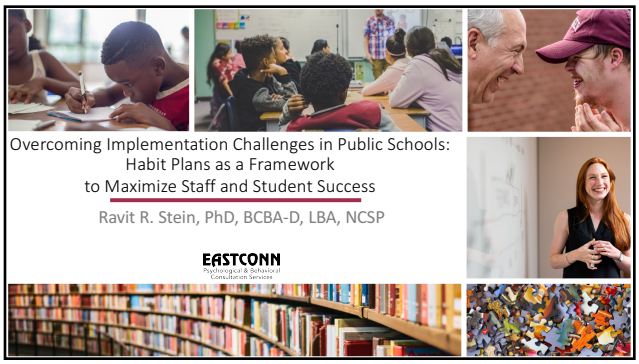
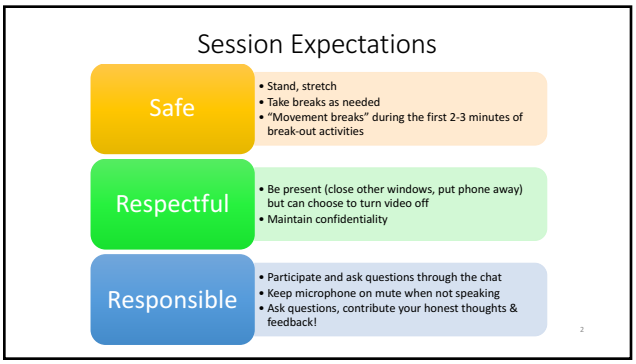
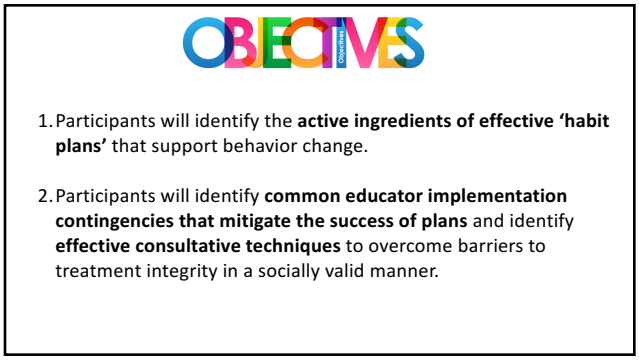
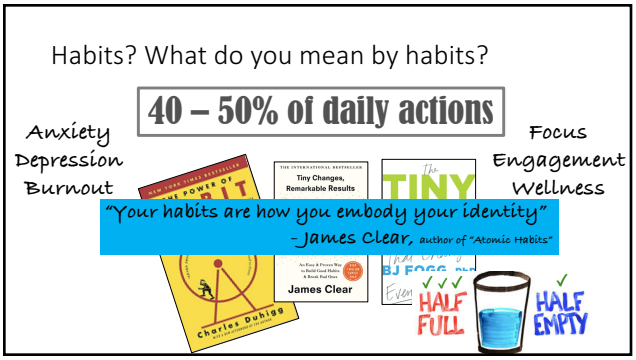
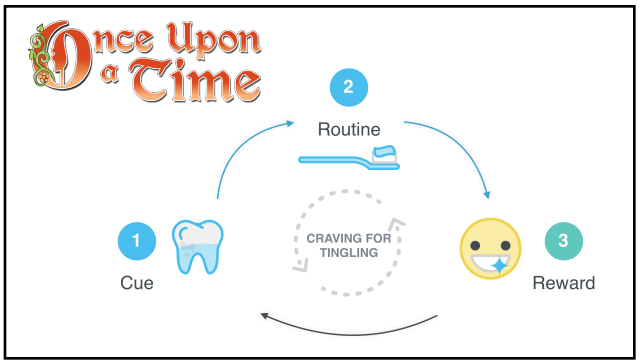
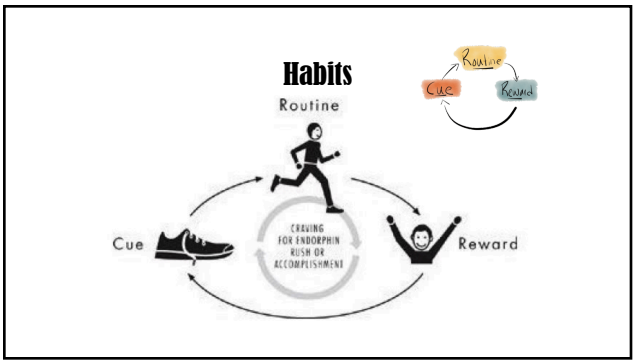

Overcoming Implementation Challenges in Public Schools:
Habit Plans as a Framework
to Maximize Staff and Student Success
Ravit R. Stein, PhD, BCBA-D, LBA, NCSP
EASTCONN


Session Expectations
Safe
• Stand, stretch
• Take breaks as needed
• "Movement breaks" during the first 2-3 minutes of break-out activities
Respectful
• Be present (close other windows, put phone away) but can choose to turn video off
• Maintain confidentiality
Responsible
• Participate and ask questions through the chat
• Keep microphone on mute when not speaking
• Ask questions, contribute your honest thoughts & feedback!

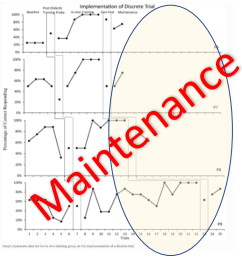

OBJECTIVES
1. Participants will identify the **active ingredients of effective 'habit plans'** that support behavior change.
2. Participants will identify **common educator implementation contingencies that mitigate the success of plans** and identify **effective consultative techniques** to overcome barriers to treatment integrity in a socially valid manner.


Habits? What do you mean by habits?
40 – 50% of daily actions
Anxiety
Depression
Burnout
Focus
Engagement
Wellness
"Your habits are how you embody your identity"
-James Clear, author of "Atomic Habits"
Tiny Changes, Remarkable Results
James Clear
Charles Duhigg
HALF FULL
HALF EMPTY

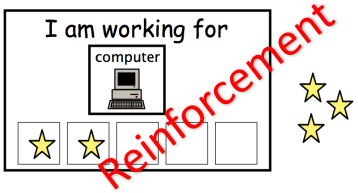

Once Upon a Time
2
Routine
1
Cue
CRAVING FOR TINGLING
3
Reward


Habits
Routine
Cue
Reward
CRAVING FOR ENDORPHIN RUSH OR ACCOMPLISHMENT

ABA Principles & Habit Planning



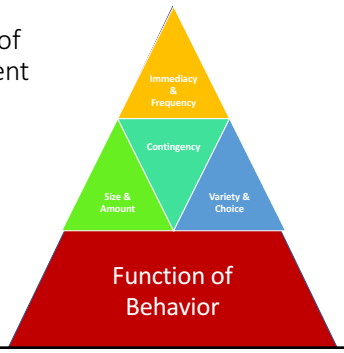
Maintenance



Reinforcement

DOI: https://doi.org/10.1007/s10864-018-9304-0

Parameters of Reinforcement



Factors Influencing the Effectiveness of Function-Based Reinforcement

Immediacy
- What is the delay between behavior and reinforcement?

Frequency
- How many opportunities are there to earn per hour, day, week?

Size/Amount
- How much reinforcement is provided? How many? For how long?

Contingency
- How consistently does the response match the behavior?

Variety/Choice
- How well does the reward match students' varied interests and motivations?

Reinforcement in Habit Planning

Tiny Indulgence

Positive Journal

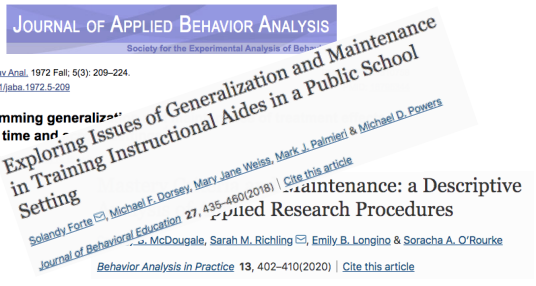
Delegate a Chore

Hot Bath

Walk in Nature

10

Maintenance in ABA & Habit Planning!



JOURNAL OF APPLIED BEHAVIOR ANALYSIS

Society for the Experimental Analysis of Behavior

J Appl Behav Anal. 1972 Fall; 5(3): 209–224.
doi: 10.1901/jaba.1972.5-209

Programming generalized
across time and

Hill M. Wal

Exploring Issues of Generalization and Maintenance in Training Instructional Aides in a Public School Setting

Solandy Forte, Michael F. Dorsey, Mary Jane Weiss, Mark J. Palmieri & Michael D. Powers | Cite this article

Journal of Behavioral Education 27, 435–460(2018)

Maintenance: a Descriptive
Applied Research Procedures

McDougale, Sarah M. Richling, Emily B. Longino & Soracha A. O'Rourke

Behavior Analysis in Practice 13, 402–410(2020) | Cite this article

Habit Plans:
A *Tool* to Support Treatment Integrity

Evidence-Based Interventions → Better Student Outcomes

Does this always happen?

Insufficient Treatment Integrity

Sample Behavior Intervention Plan Strategies

PREVENT		REPLACE	RESPOND
Setting Event Strategies To prevent the problem behavior:	Antecedent Strategies To prevent the problem behavior:	Teaching Strategies What we will teach student to do instead:	Consequence Strategies To manage the maintaining consequence:
1. Eliminate/Neutralize Setting Events: Provide Structure, Supervision, & Interaction throughout the day	2. Eliminate/Modify Antecedents • Visual Supports (schedules, pre-teach expectations, transition cues) • Provide Choice 3. Prompt Alternative/ Desired Behavior Prompt asking for: • Help • 1 More Min • Break	4. Teach Alternative Behavior Teach asking for: • Help • 1 More Min • Break 5. Teach Desired Behavior • School Expectations • Social Skills	6. Reinforce Alternative/ Desired Behavior Reinforcement: • Praise • Token Board • DRO 7. Respond to/Redirect/ Responding to Problem Bx: • Planned Ignoring • Limit verbal • Use visual

What is Treatment Integrity?

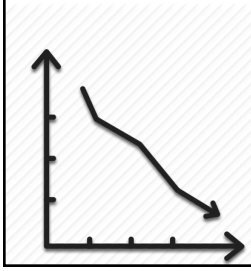
Expanded Definition

"The extent to which essential intervention components are delivered in a **comprehensive** and **consistent** manner by an interventionist **trained** to deliver the intervention" (Sanetti & Kratochwill, 2009)

Dimensions of Treatment Integrity Defined

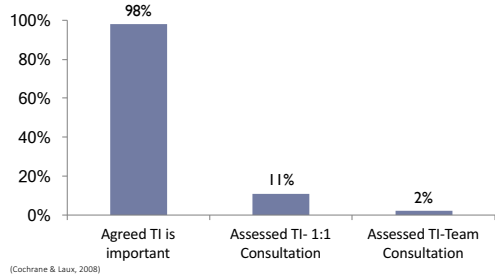
Adherence	Did they do it?
Exposure/ Participant Dosage	Did they do it enough?
Quality of Delivery	Did they do it well?
Participant responsiveness	Did they like it?

The Reality



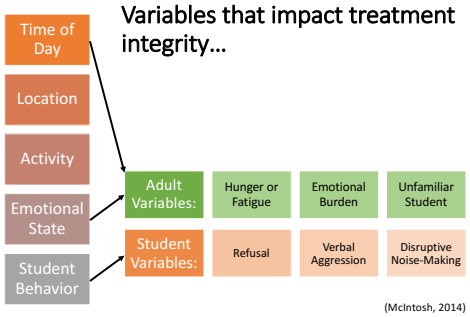
- Implementers' treatment integrity often decreases to low levels within 1-10 days.
  - (Sanetti & Kratochwill, 2007; Mortenson & Witt, 1998; Noell, et al., 1997, 2005; Witt et al., 1997)
- Low levels of treatment integrity are associated with worse student outcomes.
  - (Gansle & McMahon, 1997; Greenwood et al., 1992; Noell et al., 2002)
- Measuring treatment integrity is uncommon practice.

Treatment Integrity Assessment in Practice



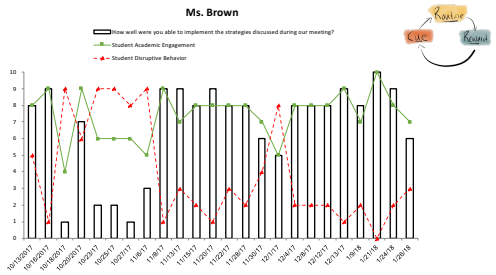
(Cochrane & Laux, 2008)

Variables that impact treatment integrity…



(McIntosh, 2014)

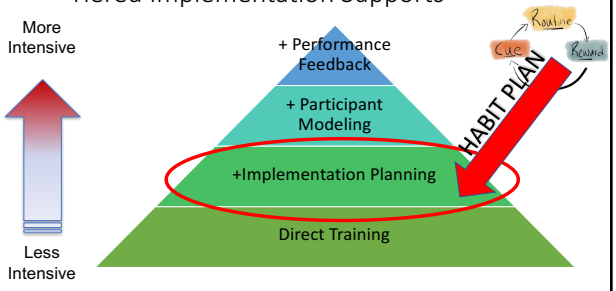
Variability in treatment integrity



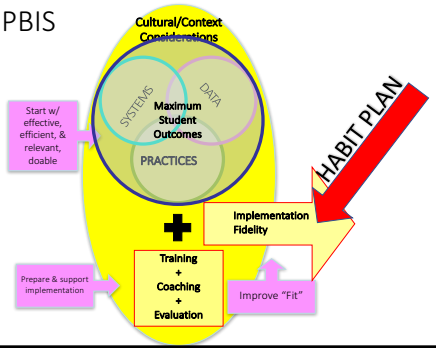
Evidence Based Treatment Integrity Tools

Break down intervention	Rate the steps	Frequency of TI	Modality of TI
List specific intervention steps	Adherence (and quality?)	Daily, weekly, quarterly, when student outcomes are low	Observation, permanent product, self report, checklists
	Yes/No, Likert scale, duration, frequency		

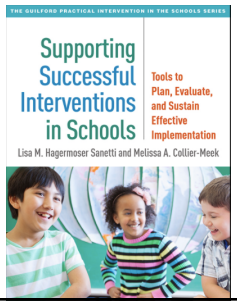
Tiered Implementation Supports



Basic SWPBIS "Logic"



For more information on treatment integrity…



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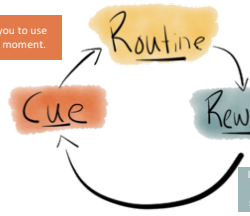
Turning behavior interventions into effortless habits!

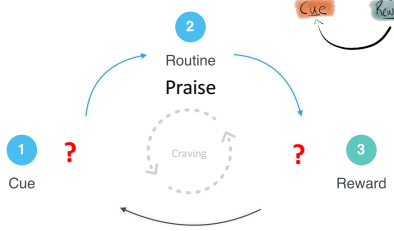
New **STRATEGY/INTERVENTION** you want to use or use more often.

A **CUE** to prompt you to use the routine in the moment.



Immediate **BENEFIT** of using the strategy/intervention.

Praise Cues & Reminders



Praise Cues & Reminders

Time	Mindfulness Bell: www.awakeningbell.org
Location	Cafeteria, Reading corner, Desk
Activity	Small Groups, Read Aloud, Seatwork
Action	Turn Page, Direction ("Please ___")
Emotional State	Surprised at Good Behavior
People around Us	Student or group, First 3 that follow

27

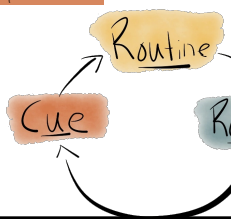
Praise Habit: *An Example*

A **CUE** to prompt you to use the routine in the moment.

After every time a student answers a question in class.

New **STRATEGY** you want to use or use more often.

Use more behavior-specific praise.



BUT…What is the IMMEDIATE REWARD for using the strategy?

?

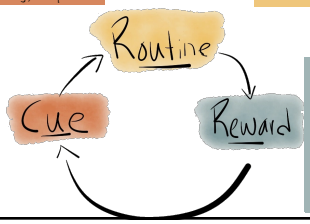
Praise Habit: *An Example*

A **CUE** to prompt you to use the routine in the moment.

Every time I give a whole-group direction (e.g., line-up)

New **STRATEGY** you want to use or use more often.

Praise first 3+ students to comply



Immediate **REWARD** for using the strategy?

Habit Plan Template:

Obvious **Cue**	*Easy* **Routine**	*Satisfying* **Reward**
When…	Implementer will…	… and be rewarded by …

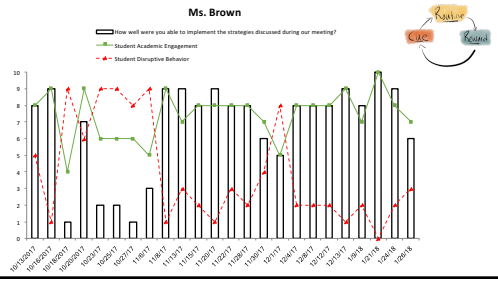
Praise Habit: *An Example*

Sticking to a New Habit

Obvious Cue	*Easy* Routine	*Satisfying* Reward
Example: Every time I give a direction (e.g., say "please ____…	*… I will praise for following the direction (e.g., say "thank you for ____")*	*Students feel appreciated and I reinforce them following my directions."* Praise Goal = $1

- Identify an obvious cue
- Consider habit stacking
- Make it easy
- Start with repetition not perfection
- Add a little immediate pleasure
- Don't break the chain

Implementation of Praise Habit: Variability is part of the process!



Effects of a Praise Habit

Extends Students' Small Senses of Victory

Builds Trusting Relationship
Builds Confidence in Abilities

Other Habits Improve

Habit Plans…Opportunities to Consider a STICK-to-It Step!

My Habit Pits (RUSTY):	*Suggested STICK-to-It Step:*
Rare: The opportunity for it is not very frequent *(less than daily)*	**Stack:** Use an existing habit as a cue *(after I ____, I will ___)*
Unobtrusive: The prompt is easy to miss *(a coach couldn't remind me)*	**Tiny:** Shrink the routine to less than 2 min.
Size: The routine takes too much effort *(more than 2 minutes)*	**Instead:** Use a smaller routine as a strategy *(instead of trying to _____, I will _____)*
Theoretical: The routine isn't specific for use *(a sub could not use it as written)*	**Clarify:** Write it out more clearly in a few steps
Yawn: The routine isn't very rewarding *(low immediate impact or satisfaction)*	**Keep it Fun:** Pair the strategy with fun/treat *(I will only do this while treating myself)*

Stacking New Habits Onto Old Ones

Cue (When…)	Routine (Staff will…)	Reward (To get…)	New Habit (Staff may…)
Student shows sign of stress with new task	**Coax** by saying "Look, it's only 3 problems."	A sense of helping the student	**Chunk** the work by reducing it visually
Student is inappropriate in hallway	**Stare** or **Ask** "You supposed to do that?"	A sense of justification	Redirect or Praise **Others**
Student is engaged appropriately	**Step away** take a break from support	Avoid duties, anticipated escalation	**Praise** (make deposit)

Stack: onto existing habit

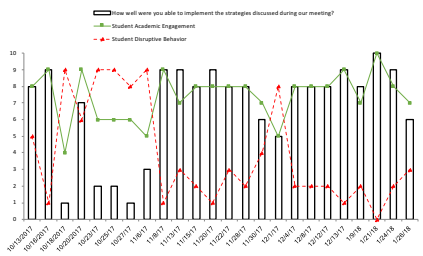
Tiny: < 2 minutes

Instead: a simpler strategy

Clarify: write it out

Keep it Fun: pair with fun/treat

It's all about the data…



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OBJECTIVES ACHIEVED?

Thank you for your participation!

For more information, contact:
Ravit Stein, PhD, BCBA-D, LBA, NCSP
EASTCONN Psychological and Behavioral Consultation Services
For follow-up questions, please e-mail rstein@eastconn.org