EIBI, ASD AND THE FORWARD MARCH OF BEHAVIOR ANALYSIS

Patrick C. Friman, Ph.D.
Boys Town Center for Behavioral Health
Behavior is a Function of Circumstances Past and Present

Fundamental Attribution Error

1. My behavior is a function of my circumstances
2. Your behavior is a function of something about you
The Typical Interpretation: Something is Wrong with Them

“I’m not a bad girl! You’re a bad mommy!”

Three Ancient Ideas About What is Wrong with Them

1. Their problem behavior is caused by defective morality.
2. Their problem behavior is caused by defective character.
3. Their problem behavior is caused by a defective psyche.
Ancient Idea #1: Defective Morality

MALLEVS
MALEFICA-
RVM, MALEFI-
cas, & earum hæresim, vt
phrasea potentissima
contenerens.

Ancient Idea #2: Flawed Character
People do not like to be thought of as defective, flawed, or mentally ill.

The ideas do not lead to effective correctives.

Viewing people as defective, flawed, or mentally ill often leads to harsh judgment and treatment.
The New Idea: Problem Behavior is a Function of Circumstances

- “There is no such thing as a bad boy, only bad environment, modeling, and teaching”
  - Father Edward Flanagan

Advantages of the Circumstantial View of Problem Behavior

1. People welcome the circumstantial view of their problem behavior
2. Circumstances can be modified in ways that improve the problem behavior
3. The circumstantial view does not justify harsh judgment and treatment
The Circumstantial Approach to Emptying Human Warehouses

1. Normalization
2. Circumstantial programs
3. Deinstitutionalization

Treatments Derived from the Circumstantial View of Behavior

- Autism
  - EIBI
- Habit disorders
  - Habit reversal
- Incontinence
  - Full spectrum behavioral treatment
- Anxiety
  - Escape extinction
- Depression
  - Behavioral activation
  - ACT
- Addiction
  - Contingency management
A Circumstantial Perspective on 
Pain (and Suffering)

1. Pain
   1. Organic
   2. Functional
2. Pain behavior
   1. Focus
   2. Expression
3. Response to pain
   1. Hovering
   2. Sympathy
   3. Special treatment