The background of the slide features abstract, overlapping geometric shapes in various shades of blue, ranging from light sky blue to deep navy blue. These shapes are primarily located on the left and right sides of the slide, framing the central text area.

Training classroom staff to implement research validated instructional strategies for students with autism through the use of behavior analytic principles

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Who We Are

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Rationale

- ▶ A key variable affecting the performance of direct support staff is the quality of supervision/training provided to these individuals. (Green, Rollyson and Passante, 2002)

Rationale

- ▶ Despite existing research on staff training dating back to the 1970's, there appears to be a need for increased guidance to behavior analysts in best practice training provision, as staff in general often do not demonstrate the procedures they are taught correctly. (Parsons, Rollyson and Reid, 2011)

Rationale

- ▶ It is important to distinguish whether you are training verbal skills (increasing knowledge), performance skills or both as each requires a different training methodology. Training verbal skills is typically done through traditional lecture/presentation style which is often not effective for teaching performance skills. (Parson, Rollyson and Reid, 2011) When training direct care staff, both skill sets are important, but job requirements are weighted more heavily in performance skills.

Rationale

- ▶ Behavioral training packages have been shown to be effective for many common procedures used in teaching/treating individuals with autism spectrum disorders including discrete-trial teaching, implementation of functional analysis and paired stimulus preference assessments. (Sarokoff and Sturmey, 2004)
- ▶ Most effective and efficient training packages include, in some form, the provision of instructions, feedback, modeling and practice. (Sarokoff and Sturmey, 2004; Iwata et al., 2000; Koegel, Russo, & Rincover 1977; Lavie & Sturmey, 2002; Reid & Parsons, 1995)

In our experience:

- ▶ Turnover rate of direct care staff is high making the need for brief, effective and efficient training an absolute necessity for continuity of care in a classroom supporting children with developmental disabilities.
- ▶ Typical training often ends at the "modeling" or even the "explanation/description" phase.

In our experience:

- ▶ If feedback occurs, it tends to utilize indirect methods (review of documentation, staff self report) vs. direct methods (observing procedures and providing immediate coaching).
- ▶ Often formal supervision occurs as infrequently as once a month and takes place in an office vs. the classroom

How to train your staff:

First things first:

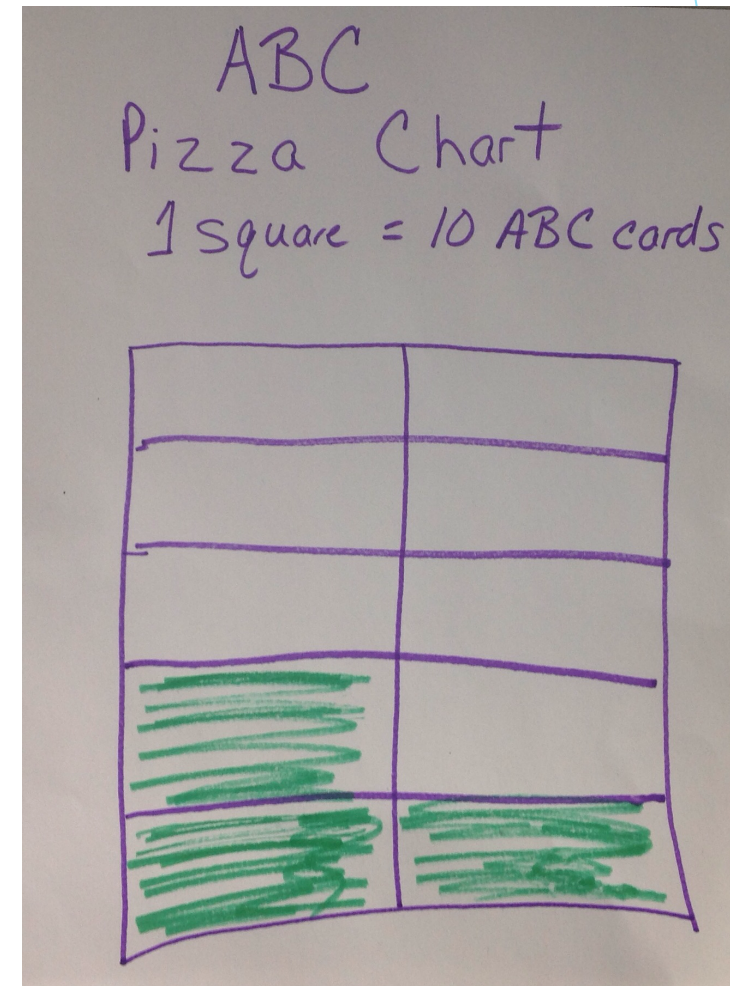
- ▶ "Pair" with your staff. We know students perform better for individuals whom they associate with the provision of reinforcement. Adults are no different. Make attempts to build a positive working relationship with your staff members before inundating them with training
- ▶ Develop a plan for reinforcing staff performance and compliance with procedures. Be creative! Use what resources are at your disposal.

First things first

- ▶ Reinforcement does not need to be expensive or elaborate. Often something as simple as verbal praise praise can go a long way

Some ideas for staff pairing, reinforcement and group contingencies

- ▶ Have an "emergency supply kit" for tough days (box with staff treats, drinks etc)
- ▶ Publicly post staff achievements
- ▶ Report to administrators when staff perform well



Training steps:

Adapted from (Parson, Rollyson and Reid, 2011)

- ▶ 1. Describe procedure
- ▶ 2. Provide a brief, written description
- ▶ 3. Model/Demonstrate
- ▶ 4. Practice
- ▶ 5. Provide feedback during practice
- ▶ 6. Repeat steps 4 and 5 to mastery

Describe

- ▶ Provide a verbal explanation of the procedure.
- ▶ Why is it being used?
- ▶ Who will it benefit?
- ▶ Know your audience: Staff may have varying degrees of behavior analytic training. If you plan to use ABA terminology, define it, or use lay terms until staff have acquired a working ABA vocabulary

Running the Interruption-Transition Procedural Integrity Checklist

Written Description

- ▶ Keep it brief. This is meant to enhance your verbal explanation, not replace it.
- ▶ A step-by-step tool or checklist is often effective. This reminds staff members precisely the behaviors in which they are expected to engage.

Student: _____ Date: _____

1. Did you identify and have prepared in advance the Promise Reinforcers to be used in the interruption transition training?	YES NO
2. Did you identify the demand to transition to, the less reinforcing activity to move to, prior to giving the direction?	YES NO
3. Did you present the Promise Reinforcer before you gave the direction to transition?	YES NO
4. Did you present the direction to transition in clear direct wording?	YES NO
5. Did you fade the use of Promise Reinforcer through intermittent trials for easy transitions?	YES NO
6. Did you intersperse both easy and target transitions during training session?	YES NO
7. Did you run interruption-transition trials on an unpredictable schedule?	YES NO
8. Did you run transition trials rarely in relation to other teaching trials? (In other words, did you still have a manding sessions or IT session and use those teaching trials in between the interruption trials?) Don't run transition trials for an entire session.	YES NO
9. If the learner successfully complied did you have him return to the preferred activity quickly and did you deliver additional reinforcement?	YES NO
10. If problem behavior occurred, did you immediately remove Promise Reinforcer?	YES NO
11. If problem behavior occurred, did you keep demand on (escape extinction) until instructional control was obtained while maintaining safety of student?	YES NO
12. If the transition was slow or needed escape extinction procedures, did you practice the transition again within a few trials in order to get better performance?	YES NO
13. Did you differentially reinforce better performance on transitions (quicker, more successful, problem free transitions get more and better reinforcement?)	YES NO
14. If problem behavior occurred, did you record data on Interruption/Transition data sheet?	YES NO
Responses	Percentage of Yes / 14

Model/Demonstrate

- ▶ Perform the procedure yourself so staff can visualize the steps
- ▶ This also serves to demonstrate your own competency with the procedure

Practice

- ▶ This should occur in two parts:
- ▶ 1. Practice with adults (role play). This allows for staff to become comfortable with the procedure without the variability in behavior that can occur when practicing with an actual student.
- ▶ 2. Practice with students.

Provide feedback during practice

- ▶ Provision of feedback should occur as close to actual staff behavior as possible. Immediate feedback in the classroom has been shown to have a greater impact on staff behavior and be more effective than feedback occurring at a later time in a different setting. (Goodman, Brady, Duffy, Scott and Pollard, 2008; Gallant, Thyer and Bailey, 1991; Scheeler, Congdon, & Stansbery, 2010)
- ▶ Ideally, feedback should occur within 3 seconds of the behavior. (Scheeler, McKinnon and Stout, 2012)

Provide feedback during practice

- ▶ Scheduling feedback even hours later allows staff the ability to practice and become accustomed to errors, making them more difficult to correct. (Goodman, Brady, Duffy, Scott and Pollard, 2008)
- ▶ Think of yourself as a coach. Provide brief, precise feedback in the moment, while staff person performs the procedure, allowing the individual either to make immediate corrections or experience immediate reinforcement for correct procedural implementation

Repeat steps 4&5 to mastery

- ▶ Use the same procedural checklist for this step provided in your written description.
- ▶ Using a checklist to guide the feedback to you staff provides a brief, concrete, measurable and effective way to gauge staff performance (Casey and McWilliam, 2011)
- ▶ We consider "mastery" 3 consecutive procedural checklists scored at 100%.

Repeat steps 4&5 to mastery

- ▶ Once mastery is reached, fidelity checklists are completed approximately one time per month for maintenance (more or less depending upon experience level and history of procedural drift of individual staff members).

Video activity







A note about in the moment coaching:

- ▶ Initially staff members are unaccustomed to this type of training and express discomfort with the procedure.
- ▶ Reassure staff members that discomfort experienced while being coached is common and eventually dissipates.
- ▶ Do not allow staff discomfort to be the reason you change to a training procedure with less research to support it

A note about in-the-moment coaching

- ▶ Find ways to make coaching more palatable for staff
- ▶ Remember to provide both reinforcing and corrective feedback during coaching. Excessive corrective feedback can begin to have an aversive affect on your relationship with staff members

Pit falls

- ▶ Don't forget maintenance. Procedural drift will eventually occur if feedback is not provided regularly.
- ▶ Remember to reinforce. Do not focus only on what staff members need to improve.
- ▶ Staff typically perform the same whether or not they are aware you are observing. (Coddling, Livanis, Pace and Vaca, 2008) "Sneaky" observations can decrease trust, so avoid whenever possible.

Pit falls

- ▶ Get your hands dirty. It demonstrates your own competency and can increase staff respect and trust

Hard to train staff

Reasons an individual can be difficult to train:

1. A history of having been reinforced for using procedures that do not align with ABA principles
2. Previous improper "ABA" training
3. Little to no previous training or experience with the population you are serving
4. Staff anxiety

Hard to train staff

- 5. Staff's expectations of job duties do not align with actual job duties
- 6. Aversion to training due to poor or ineffective past training.

Hard to train staff

What to do:

1. Pick one topic or procedure to focus on to mastery before introducing another. Once mastery is achieved and another procedure is introduced, maintenance of the first procedure will be of significant importance.
2. Reinforce frequently for small accomplishments or behaviors that begin to approximate the procedure you are endeavoring to train

Hard to train staff

- ▶ What to do cont.
- 3. Keep a positive working relationship with the individual staff member. Communicate openly and encourage him/her to do the same. Chances are this individual is as frustrated with having difficulty learning the procedure as you are with training them

Hard to train staff

► What to do cont.

4. For highly anxious staff (particularly performance anxiety), you may need to begin to provide feedback immediately following the completion of the procedure you are training vs. in-the-moment coaching. This should be the **EXCEPTION** not the rule. We've found that staff with high levels of anxiety can have difficulty focusing on the procedure and your feedback at the same time. This should only occur after having attempted coaching for a reasonable length of time with no improvement in performance.

Hard to train staff

- ▶ What to do cont.

5. Determine if the the issue is skill related or a reluctance to comply. You may need to seek assistance from an administrator with compliance issues once other avenues have been exhausted.

Questions?

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