



Pangea Inclusive Supports Seminar Series

Behaviour Tips and Tools for Caregivers

Part 2: Antecedent Strategies

July 22, 2025

Amber Zealand M.Ads, BCBA, R.B.A (Ont)

Agenda



- Presenter bio
- Review from Part 1
 - Functions of Behaviour
 - Indirect Perception of Function of Behaviour
- Learn about Environmental variables
- Setting events vs Triggers
 - Trauma and how this impacts setting events
- Introduce Chronological vs Developmental ages
- Diagnosis vs Individual
- Introduce matching arousal level to environment



Presenter: Amber Zealand M.Ads, BCBA, R.B.A (Ont)

I have been a Board Certified Behaviour Analysis (BCBA) and Registered Behaviour Analyst (R.B.A Ont) for over 10 years, but working in this field for over 20 years. I am trained in the principles of Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) having have worked in clinical, community, school, recreational, respite and childcare settings. I have worked with individuals as young as 12 months old to adults under the age of 60. I have provided direct therapy and mediator model support to individuals diagnosed with: Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Disorder (FASD), Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Learning disabilities (LD), Down Syndrome, anxiety, childhood onset bipolar, those exposed to trauma and neurotypical individuals.

I am currently working full time in the education system, teaching part-time at Durham College while providing clinical services to clients through my own ABA company.

I am also in the process of completing my Doctorate of Education with a specialization in ABA.

I am also the mom of a 14 year old girl and 12 year old boy who are very excited for the return of 'summer mom'

Week 1 Introduction to Behaviour Summary

Functions of Behaviour



- To balance
- Feels good
- 'automatic behaviour'
- Can be replaced with functional play leisure or academic skills



- To get response from people
 - Positive
 - Negative
- To get assistance from people



- To move away
- To move towards



- To get desired item
- To get BACK a removed item OR prevent removal

Examples vs Reality

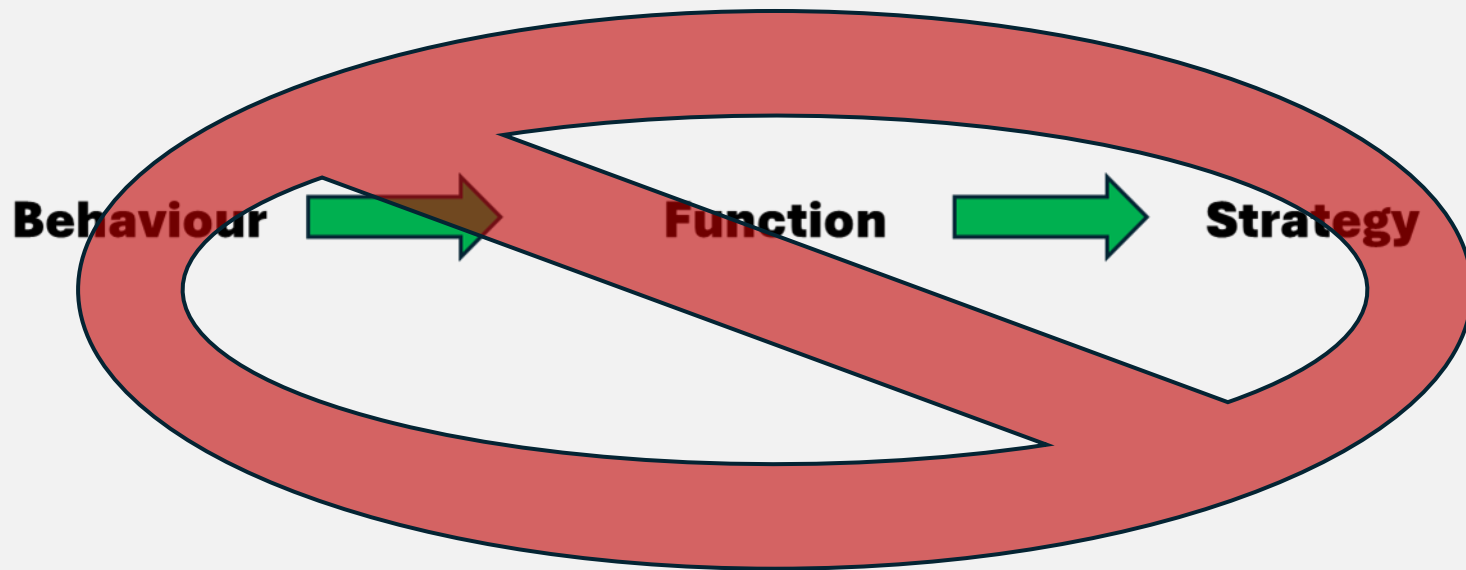


- Most behaviour is multi-functional
- Function changes bases on context
 - Environment
 - People
 - Potential for good things OR bad things

What does that mean...

—

Behaviour is not an equation



X –does not apply

Questions / Discussions



New Material: Antecedent



Environment: External

What is occurring around us and one or more of our senses interact with.

Environmental:
External

Is interpretation
correct in what is
observed in the
environment?

Is there a risk
(Flight, Fight or
Freeze response)

Environment: External

Environment



Is there fire



Is there a risk



Behaviour



- 1) Loud volume
- 2) Content 'ahh fire'

Environment: External

Environment



Is there fire



Is there a risk



Behaviour



- 1) Loud volume
- 2) Content 'ahh fire'

Environment: External

Environment



Is there fire



Is there a risk



Behaviour



- 1) Loud volume
- 2) Content 'ahh fire'

Environment: External

Environment



Is there fire



Is there a risk



Behaviour



- 1) Loud volume
- 2) Content 'ahh fire'

Environmental: External

1/4 (25%) that identified the correct risk and labeled

2/4 (50%) they identified a 'risk'

2/4 (50%) they identified the correct item BUT could not see the difference between 'risk' and 'safety'

1/4 (25%) was a total error BUT it was something that COULD have been

Environment: Internal



This is going to be unique to each person

- Perception
- Memory (experiences)
- Knowledge
- Culture

Activity



Environment: Internal

- When I asked you the first time there was 3 potential choices all were correct
- The second time 2
- Only the 3 time did I give you ALL the information to guarantee the correct answer.
- Our **perceptions, knowledge, and learning** guided us to that answer

Environmental: Internal



Perception – my new item is good (cool)

Culture – this is based on the time and their social influences

Knowledge – they have learned this by listening to friends or social media

Memory/experience: they heard others say these word and are repeating

Environment: Internal



Smell – strong negative



taste – strong negative (most)



Touch – strong negative



Sound – strong negative

Environmental: Internal

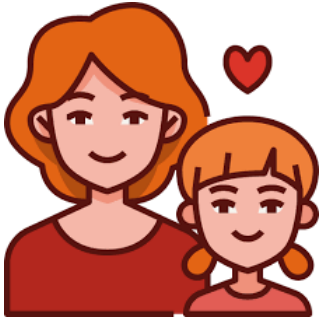


Environment: Internal

- Unique to each person
- Some things may change
- Some may be 'core memories' or be with them forever.
- The only way we can find out about internal:
 - Ask them
 - Watch and look for patterns

Environment

- Internal and external environments are not actual separate



Mom



Daughter



RBA



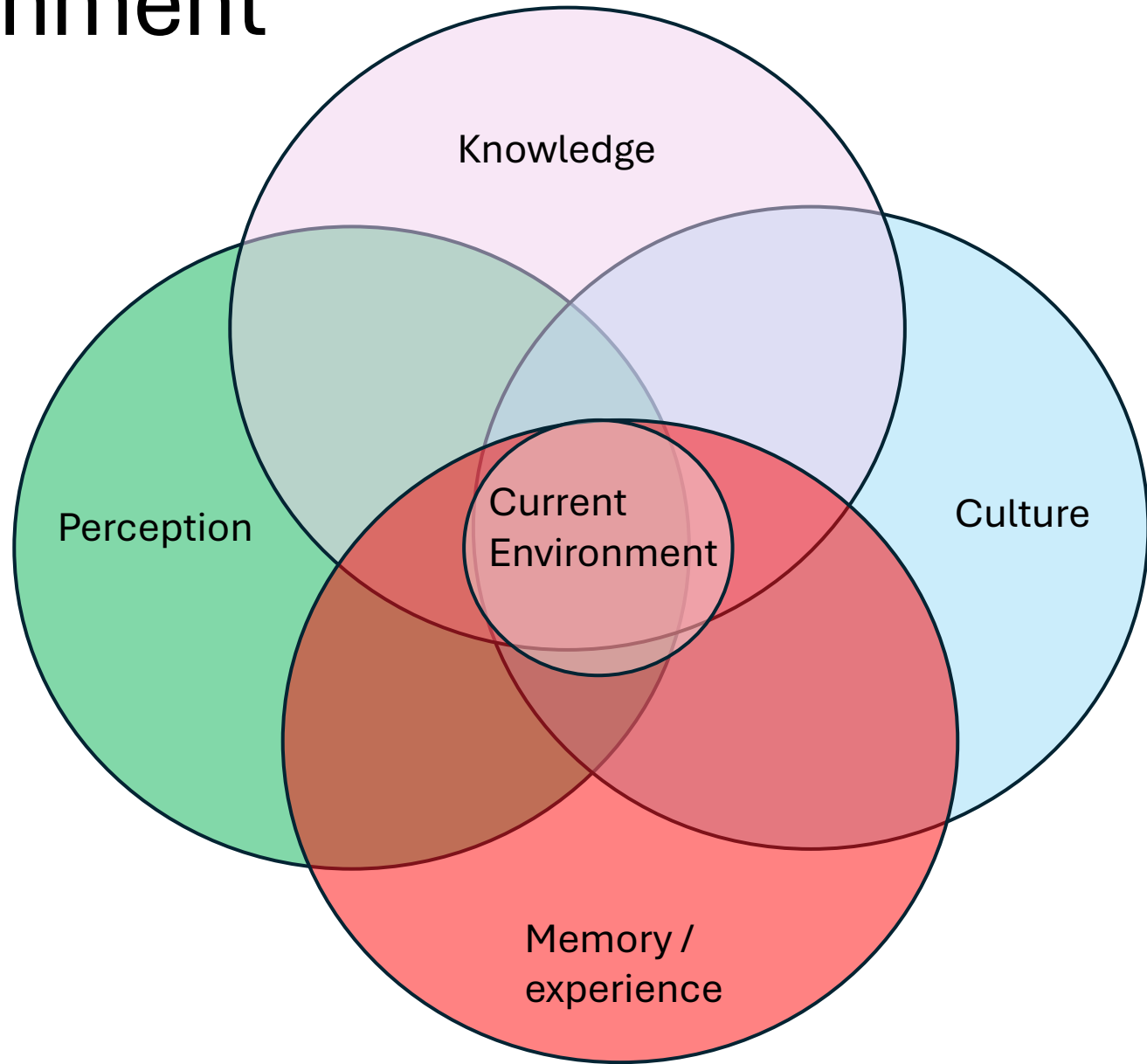
Student



Friend

- You are the same person in each of these but do YOU act the same?

Environment



Questions



Setting Events

- Anything that increases the probability that behaviours can occur.
- Can happen years, months, hours before

Examples:

- illness
- tired
- medication changes
- cumulative triggers
- time of day

Behaviour: stay up late to study



shutterstock.com · 94524865

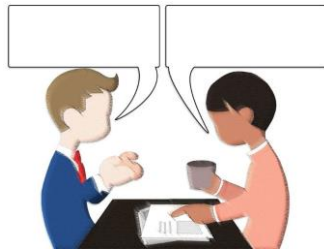
Non-Behaviour: run over nail



Triggers

- Anything that has a HIGH chance of causing a behaviour (more than 70% of the time if you ask this you get a behaviour).
- Frustration is the inconsistency (related to setting event cumulative part).

Behaviour: ask
you to do work



Non-Behaviour:
speed bump slow
down



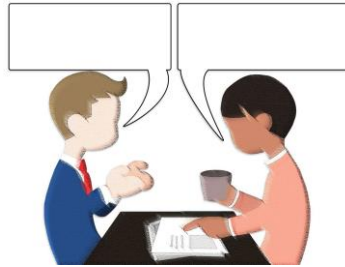
Setting Events



shutterstock.com • 94524865

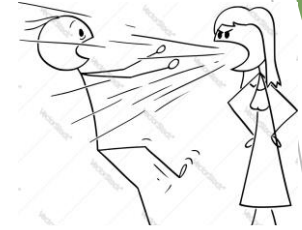
Stayed up late
reading

Trigger



Ask you to do work

Behaviour



Scream: no I have
so much to do

Setting Events



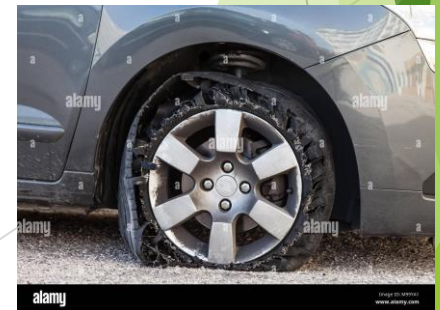
Nail in Tire

Trigger



Drive over
speed bump

Behaviour

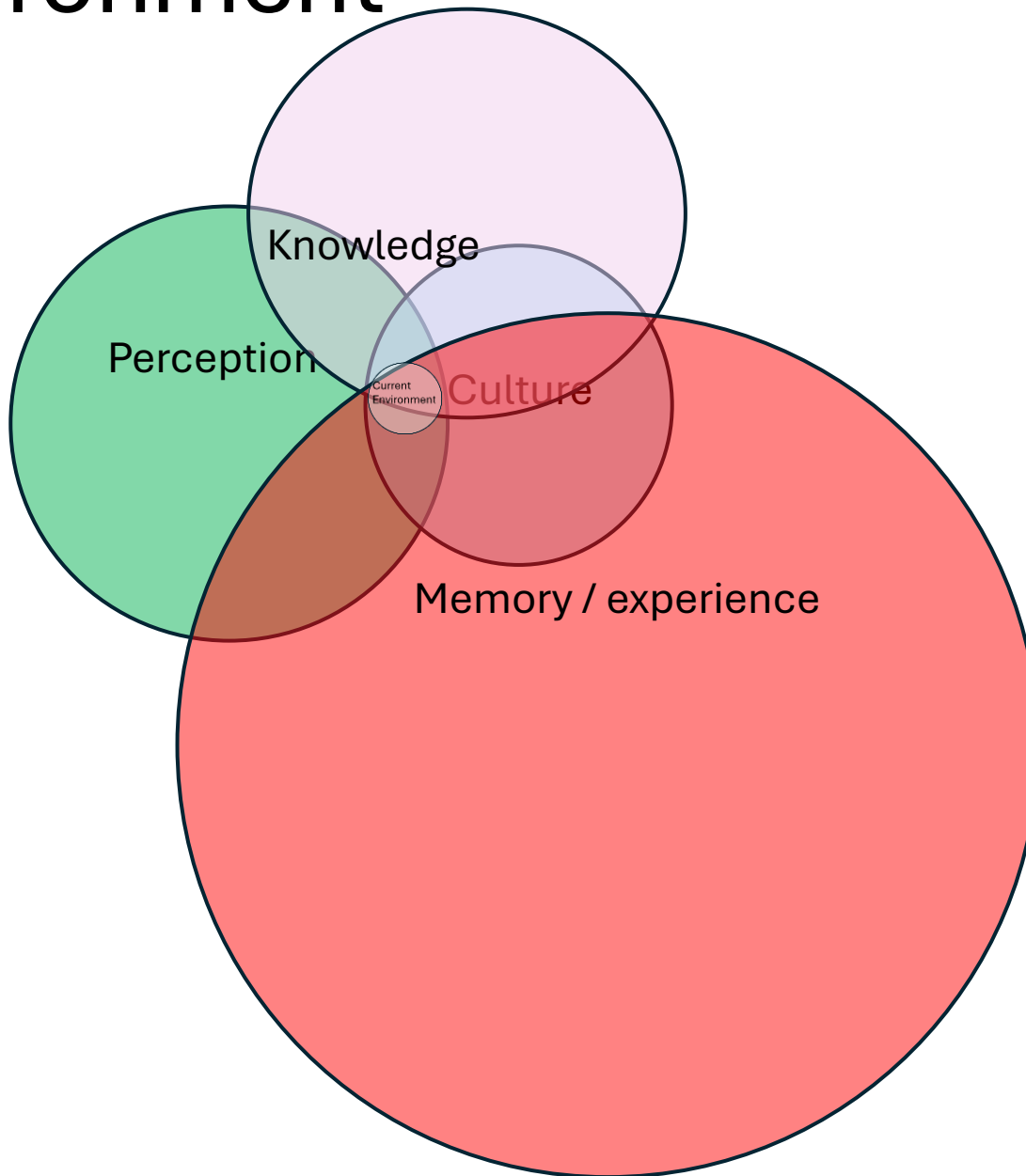


Flat tire



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xYBUY1kZpf8&t=3s>

Environment



Questions / Discussion



Chronological vs Developmental Age

Chronological: that is how old a child is based on when they were born

Developmental: this is how the child is based on the skills they have based on what chronological age the average child learns them.

Chronological vs Developmental Age

- **Gaps:** these are skills that an individual does NOT have, between skills.
- **Splinter:** these are skills that an individual does have or is really good at.

The problem we often see a **splinter skill** and assume if they can do that skill they have all the skills beneath it and make the **gap** bigger.

Do NOT assume support your child to make sure that they have all foundation skills.

Chronological vs Developmental Age

- Domains: emotional, social, physical development
- Possible to be at different ages in each of these areas.
- Possible to have splinter and gaps even within these domains.
- Diagnosis will tell us there is a GREATER probability of gaps and splinters BUT does not automatically mean the person can't or won't be able to learn.
- Diagnosis can HELP us to provide strategies, but we still look at the individual and the family to support.

The Behavioral Language Assessment Form

Score	Cooperation - A	Request (Mand) - F	Motor Imitation - D	Vocal Play - E/I	Vocal Imitation (Echoic) - E	Matching to Sample (Visual Performance) - B
5						
4						
3						
2						
1						

Score	Receptive Language - C	Labeling (Tact) - G	Receptive by Function, Feature, Class - C	Conversational Skills (Intraverbals) - H	Letters and Numbers - Q/R	Social Interaction - K, L, M, N
5						
4						
3						
2						
1						

1-2 = Early Learner

3-4 = Intermediate Learner

4-5 = Advanced Learner

For the following questions, indicate the level of performance that best describes the learner's typical level of performance.

1. Cooperation with Adults _____ (enter score)

How easy is it to work with the child?

1. Always uncooperative, avoids work, engages in negative behavior
2. Will do only one brief and easy response for a powerful reinforcer
3. Will give 5 responses without disruptive behavior
4. Will work for 5 minutes without disruptive behavior
5. Works well for 10 minutes at a table without disruptive behavior

2. Requests (Mands) _____

How does the learner let his needs and wants be known?

1. Cannot ask for reinforcers; or engages in negative behavior
2. Pulls people, points, or stands by reinforcing items
3. Uses 1-5 words, signs, or pictures to ask for reinforcers
4. Uses 5-10 words, signs, or pictures to ask for reinforcers
5. Frequently requests using 10 or more words, signs, or pictures

3. Motor Imitation _____

Does the learner copy actions?

1. Cannot imitate anybody's motor movements
2. Imitates a few gross motor movements modeled by others
3. Imitates several gross motor movements on request
4. Imitates several fine and gross motor movements on request
5. Easily imitates any fine or gross movements, often spontaneously

4. Vocal Play _____

Does the learner spontaneously say sounds and words?

1. Does not make any sounds (mute)
2. Makes a few speech sounds at a low rate
3. Vocalizes many speech sounds with varied intonations
4. Vocalizes frequently with varied intonation and says a few words
5. Vocalizes frequently and says many clearly understandable words

- Questionnaire that can be completed by anyone that knows the individual
- While the research for this tool indicates all areas SHOULD be demonstrated by the end of kindergarten grade 1 there are some areas that HAVE been missed (gaps) by even older individuals
- MAY be useful if you have a child under 10-12 to complete to help you identify gaps and splinter skills

Chronological vs. Developmental Age

- Up to between 6-8 the focus is on typical development
- After 8 there is a shift into 'diagnosis' and often will require additional support.
- Families will always be at the centre of decisions and treatment approaches.
- There is little resources for parents to 'check' because these individuals need different types of assessments and supports.
- Go back to younger ones and see where **splinter** and **gaps** are and take these to professionals as a start.

Chronological vs Developmental Age: Resource List

- <https://lookseechecklist.com/en/>
- <https://help.junoemr.com/support/solutions/articles/3000056333-developmental-screen-nipissing-district-1mo-to-6yo->
- <https://agesandstages.com/products-pricing/asq3/>
- <https://www.mchatscreen.com/>
- https://www.brightfutures.org/development/materials/middle_04-16.pdf
(copy sent to Pangea)
- <https://www.caddra.ca/wp-content/uploads/WFIRS-P.pdf> (copy sent to Pangea)

Questions



Diagnosis

-
- Male
 - Brown hair
 - 8 years old
 - ASD
 - Grade 3
 - Middle child
 - 2 parents
 - 5 cats
 - Lives in Bowmanville
 - Diabetic

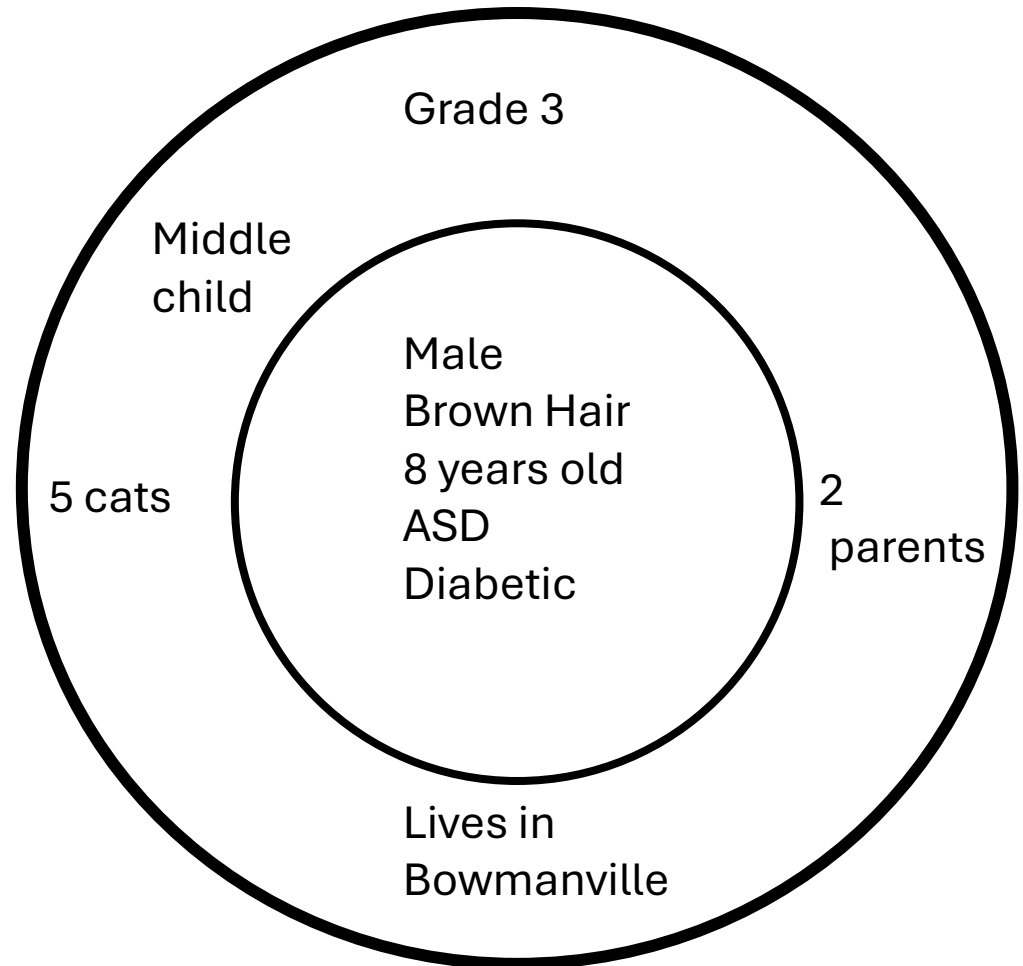


Diagnosis

Internal and External factors

We consider both

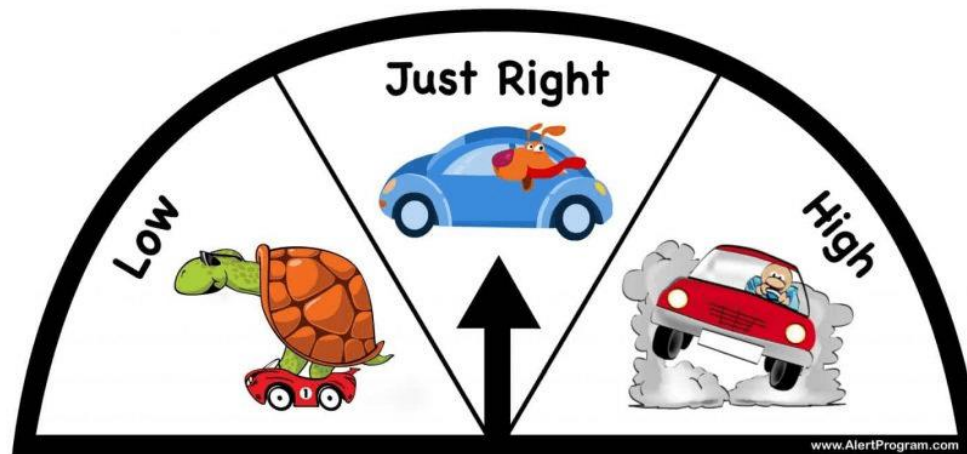
A diagnosis does not DEFINE
who the individual is, but it adds
information



Questions



Matching Arousal to Environment: Introduction.



LOW/ SLOW: your body is under aroused

JUST RIGHT: this is when you are in that CALM state

HIGH/FAST: this is when you are over aroused

Matching Arousal to Environment: Introduction.

Environment



Part 3: Consequences

-
- What happens AFTER the behaviour
 - How to plan instead of react
 - Positive vs negative consequences
 - **Learning History:** how do the consequences influence future occurrences of behaviour
 - How do I increase the behaviour I want
 - How do I decrease the behaviours I don't want

Part 4: Behaviour Change and Skill Development

-
- You can't make a behaviour 'disappear' you need to replace it
 - Expand more on chronological vs developmental development
 - How do I pick a replacement skill?
 - Practice Practice Practice

Questions and Discussion



References

Leaf, J.B., Cihon, J.H., Leaf, R., McEachin, J., Liu, N., Russell, N., Unumb, L., Shapiro, S., & Khosrowshahi, D. (2021). Concerns about ABA-based intervention: an evaluation and . *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders* 52. pp. 2838-2853.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10803-021-05137-y>