

## CHAPTER 14 - MANAGING ANTECEDENTS

### **Identifying and modifying existing antecedents**

- the first step in managing antecedents to change behavior is to identify the existing cues through observational methods as a part of a functional assessment

### **Identifying antecedents**

- hunches should not be conclusion - sometimes our hunches are based on antecedents we know operate a particular behavior in people other than the target person but are often specific to the individual
- we need to assess the antecedents for each person

### **Antecedents for behavioral excesses**

- antecedents that are overt and immediate are usually fairly easy to identify because they are present and observable just before the target behavior occurs
- antecedents that are covert or distant are usually difficult to identify because they are not directly observable and consist of feelings, thoughts, psychological states

### **Antecedents for behavioral deficits**

- we need to identify cues that set the occasion for a behavior not occurring - linked to nonoccurrences

### **Ways to alter the antecedents**

Four basic ways to manipulate stimuli:

1. develop or introduce new cues (discriminative stimuli)
  - involves teaching individuals discriminative stimuli they don't already know
  - provide a consequence, such as reinforcement, for a particular behavior when a specific stimulus is present but not when some other stimulus is present
2. modify existing cues
  - within-stimulus prompt
  - extra-stimulus prompt
3. manipulate motivating operations
4. manipulate the effort needed to make responses
  - "law of least effort" - they are more likely to make responses that are easy to do than hard to do

### **Managing discriminative stimulus**

Two approaches - eliminating or reducing existing antecedents for a problem behavior and developing or introducing antecedents for a desirable act

### **Changing response effort**

**Response effort** - amount of work it takes to perform a behavior - because people are less likely to perform behaviors that require more response effort than behaviors that take less effort, we can manage antecedents by making problem behaviors more difficult to do or making desirable behaviors easier to do - for examples, kids using mands

### **Altering antecedent chains**

Altering antecedent chains - changing the sequence of events that lead to a certain behavior in some way - two ways to alter chains:

1. build pauses into the chain
2. reorder the links