

Autism Q&A Fact Sheet

Autism Q&A: Antecedent Based Intervention

QUESTION: What is Antecedent Based Intervention?

ANSWER.

In order to understand Antecedent Based Intervention (ABI), it is first important to understand three term contingency. While it sounds complicated, the three term contingency is most easily understood through the ABCs. The ABCs, in this case, stand for antecedent, behavior, and consequence. The antecedent is what happens directly before the behavior. Then the behavior occurs. Finally, the consequence is what happens directly after the behavior.

Let's look at an example of this.

A teacher tells a student to get out his math book and complete page 32 (the antecedent). The student gets out his math book and starts working (the behavior). The student then finishes his assignment and is provided with praise (consequence).

ABI are evidence-based and proactive strategies designed to reduce the occurrence of interfering, or problematic, behavior. ABI focuses on modifying the environment and changing the elements that could trigger an interfering behavior. In other words, the goal of ABI is identifying what in the environment is causing the interfering behavior and putting things in place that will PREVENT the issue from ever occurring. These proactive strategies help the student feel safe, in control, and prepared!



QUESTION: What are some examples of Antecedent Based Interventions?

ANSWER.

There are many aspects to ABI including:

- modifying the environment,
- providing choices, and
- using motivating items.

Modifying the environment can include many different considerations such as physical structure and visual clarity, visual supports, schedules, and routines. Physical structure and visual clarity refer to the way we reduce distractions by using clearly defined spaces, both physically and visually, organization, arrangement and flow. These changes can help the student intuitively understand what is expected of a task and the steps to complete it.

Visual supports are tools that help make transient auditory information more permanent. Visual supports help provide clarity and can include a picture, a graphic representation, a schedule, or a word. Visual supports help students with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) understand rules, routines, tasks, expectations, or social responses.

Schedules are especially important because individuals with ASD often struggle with time management skills and transitioning or schedule changes. While routines and schedules might sound the same, they are actually different. A schedule helps us understand the expectations throughout the day.

Routines, on the other hand, are the commonly occurring tasks we complete daily or regularly like

getting dressed and brushing our teeth. Classroom routines might include arriving at school, participating in circle time, getting our classroom supplies, and even solving mathematical equations or writing a paragraph. Teaching and providing routines for individuals with ASD helps reduce anxiety and ultimately increases independence!

Further, providing choices is a crucial aspect to ABI. While it is important to provide choices, it is also equally important to respect the decisions an individual makes. Opportunities for choices and respect for our decisions helps us all feel like we are in control of our lives. Motivation is another key component to ABI. Many individuals with ASD, as well as some typically developing individuals, are not always intrinsically motivated. In other words, they are not motivated by the task itself or the feeling of accomplishment. Lack of motivation can cause interfering behaviors, slow progress on skills, and cause a sense of disconnectedness from the environment. Using strengths and interests, providing opportunities to develop competence, and understanding how to use what motivates an individual is a powerful piece of ABI.

QUESTION: Why is ABI important?
ANSWER.....

Due to the primary and secondary characteristics of ASD, individuals can face a variety of challenges on a daily basis. Many of these challenges often make the world feel like a confusing and chaotic place. It can be hard for the individual with ASD to understand what the expectations are and how to be successful in different tasks. Further, many individuals with ASD can experience a tremendous amount of stress and anxiety throughout the day. It's important to understand that behavior is communication. When individuals with ASD demonstrate interfering behavior, they are often trying to communicate that stress and anxiety in the only way they know how. However, it's important to understand that using Antecedent Based Interventions can help the student feel calm, in control, and prepared. ABI reduces stress and anxiety by creating predictability and clarity in environments

and events for individuals with ASD. Teaching individuals how to navigate daily routines, how to understand the daily expectations, and how to understand rules, tasks, and social responses helps increase independence and ensure success! Of course, providing choices and using motivation helps an individual feel more in control of their life and creates opportunities for success.

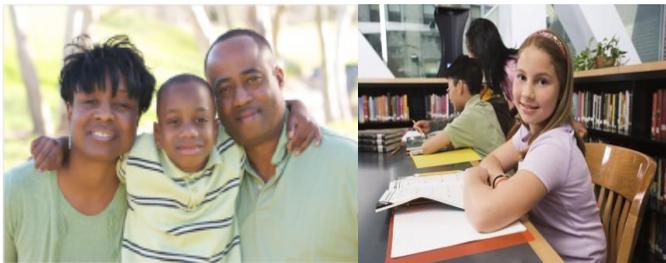
QUESTIONS TO ASK TO GATHER INFORMATION ON THE ANTECEDENTS OF A PROBLEM BEHAVIOR.

- When does the problem behavior usually occur?
- Where does the problem behavior usually occur?
- Who is present when the problem behavior occurs?
- What activities or events precede the occurrence of the problem behavior?
- What do other people say or do immediately before the problem behavior?
- Does the child engage in any other behaviors before the problem behavior?
- When, where, with whom, and in what circumstances is the problem behavior least likely to occur?

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

<http://www.nationalautismcenter.org/nsp/>
<http://autisminternetmodules.org/>

Please visit the ACE website for more resources
<http://www.vcuautismcenter.org>



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