

The Family Ecology Assessment: Enhancing Family Centered Service Delivery in PBS with Families

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Purpose of Presentation

- ▶ Introduce **Family Ecology Assessment** as supplement to a functional behavioural assessment (FBA) when developing Positive Behavior Support (PBS) plans in collaboration with families
- ▶ Highlight importance of developing PBS plans with families that meet two core standards of quality
 - ▶ **Technically sound**
 - ▶ **Contextually appropriate (Contextual fit)**
- ▶ Contend that PBS plans with these qualities are more likely to be **survivable** within richness and complexity of family life.



Purpose of Presentation (continued)

- ▶ Describe and illustrate process of:
 - ▶ Conducting a Family Ecology Assessment
 - ▶ Using Family Ecology Assessment results to:
 - ▶ Select and **define target family routines** for intervention and support
 - ▶ Ensure function-based, multicomponent PBS plans are a **good fit with target family routines**
 - ▶ Identify **family centered supports** necessary to support family as a whole



Background



Critiques of Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) in the 1980s & 1990s

- “Despite its obvious accomplishments, ABA has provided limited coverage and understanding of human behavior and of its ecological context.” (Wahler & Fox, 1981, p. 327-328)
- “We need to learn more about the needs of our potential consumers and be prepared to adapt our technology to suit them.” (Bailey, 1991, p. 448)



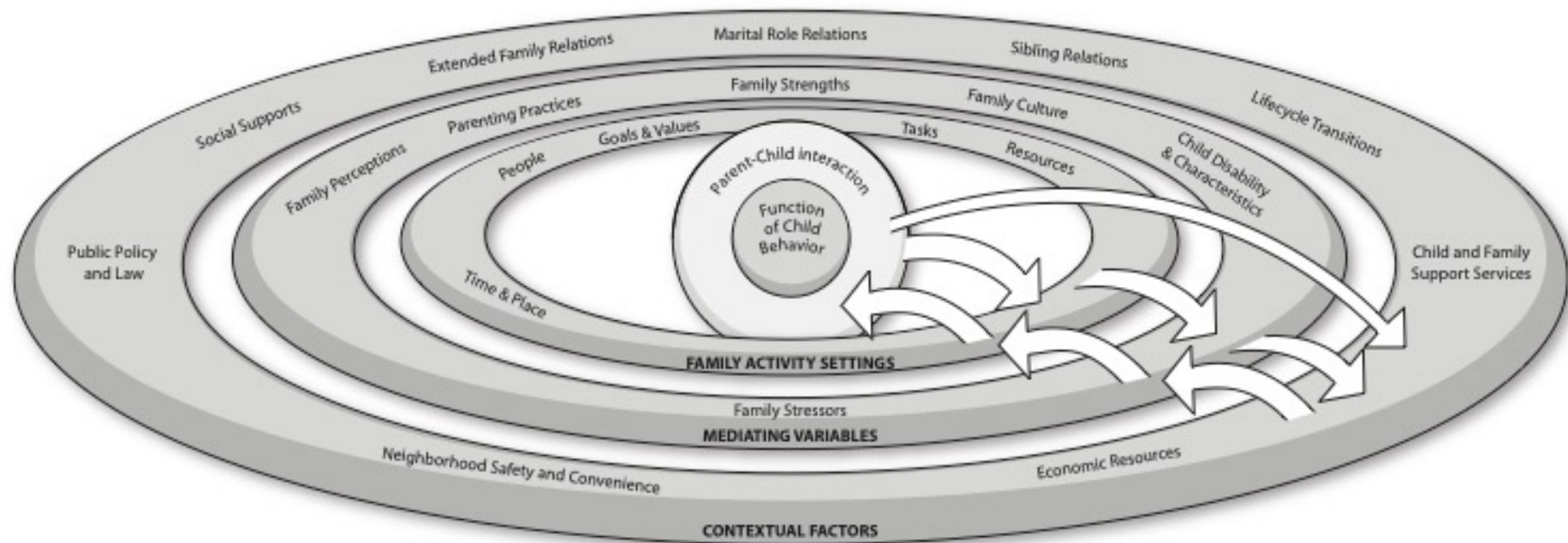
The **Survivable** Variable

- ▶ “When we teach families with handicapped members to function as a system for them all rather than [only] for the handicapped member ... The most salient outcome variable is of course whether they learn what we teach, but *the survival variable is what else happens when they do.*” (Baer, 1987)
- ▶ **Survivable Intervention:** An intervention that is effective, acceptable, feasible, durable and sustainable when implemented by and in the presence of relevant stakeholders within a family, school, and/or community-based system (Lucyshyn et al., 2009; 2015)

Survivable Interventions: Key Features



The Challenge: Addressing the Richness & Complexity of Family Life





Family Centered Positive Behaviour Support (FCPBS)

Addressing the Challenge

Family Centered PBS

- A collaborative, assessment-based approach to developing effective, individualized behavior support plans for children with developmental disabilities who engage in **severe problem behavior**
- Behavior support plans emphasize **prevention, teaching and positive reinforcement strategies** to achieve meaningful, durable, and sustainable improvements in child behavior and quality of life
- FCPBS takes into consideration **family perspectives and family systems** when developing support plans.
- FCPBS includes **family centered supports** that aim to strengthen the family as a whole.



FCPBS Core Features

- ▶ Collaborative partnership
- ▶ Comprehensive assessment
 - ▶ Family ecology assessment
 - ▶ Functional behavioural assessment
- ▶ Multicomponent behavior support plans
- ▶ Contextual fit with family life
- ▶ Family routines as unit of analysis and intervention
- ▶ Implementation support
- ▶ Ongoing evaluation and plan improvement
- ▶ Professional humility



Family Ecology Assessment



Family Ecology Assessment

- ▶ Collaborative, strengths-based assessment of features of family ecology relevant to design of contextually-appropriate PBS plans and family-centered supports (Lucyshyn et al., 2002; McLaughlin et al., 2012)
- ▶ Two parts:
 - ▶ 1. Broad assessment family ecology
 - ▶ 2. Focused assessment of family routines



Part 1. Broad Assessment of Family Ecology

➤ Purpose

- Gather broad ecological information relevant to design of **contextually appropriate** PBS plan
- Identify **family centered supports** that extend beyond components of PBS plan
- Ensure PBS plan is acceptable and feasible to family
- Nurture **trust and hope**
- Build **collaborative partnership** with family

Part 1. Broad Assessment of Family Ecology (continued)

➤ Theoretical links

- Family-centered philosophy (Dunst, Trivette & Deal, 1988)
- Strengths-based assessment (Turnbull & Turnbull, 2001)
- Stress and Adaptation Theory (Singer & Irvin, 1991)

➤ Key Elements

- Family strengths & child positive contributions
- Resources and social supports available to family
- Stressors impinging on family
- Family goals for child and family as a whole

Part 1. Broad Assessment of Family Ecology (continued)

➤ The Interview Protocol

- What would you characterize as your family's strengths?
- What would you characterize as your child's positive contributions to the family?
- What formal and informal resources have you used, or are available, to support your child and family?
- What are your sources of social support?
- What are sources of stress?
- What are your goals for: focus child; yourself as parent; family as a whole?

Guidelines for Conducting Family Ecology Assessment

- Provide rationale for conducting assessment
- Seek family's informed assent
- Schedule between 1-2 hours to conduct assessment with child's parent(s)
- Open with brief reiteration of rationale for assessment
- Prior to posing each question, provide background as to why question is important:
 - For family strengths, research shows that families of children with disabilities have many strengths (Summer et al., 1998)
 - For child contributions, research shows that children with disabilities make positive contributions to their family (e.g., sources of joy; expanded social networks; personal growth (Stainton & Besser, 1998)



Guidelines for Conducting Family Ecology Assessment (continued)

- ▶ Conduct interview in **informal, conversational** style
 - ▶ Be prepared to answer questions parents pose as well as to ask questions
 - ▶ With appropriate discretion, share information about your life related to questions if it may help facilitate conversation
- ▶ If family member discloses information they find uncomfortable, **normalize the experience**
 - ▶ Share similar event from your life.
 - ▶ Note how other families have similar experiences



Illustration: Amanda and Family

▶ Amanda

- ▶ 8-year-old girl with moderate intellectual disability
- ▶ Verbal: English & Mandarin
- ▶ Loves stuffed animals; visiting zoo

▶ Family

- ▶ Mother and father
- ▶ Older sister
- ▶ Immigrated to Canada from Taiwan
- ▶ Grandparents live next door
- ▶ Father works from home

Illustration: Family Ecology Assessment Results

► Family Strengths

- very caring
- put children first
- strong marital partnership

► Child + Contributions

- Amanda teaches parents:
 - to be patient,
 - to respect people with differences
 - to appreciate “little things”

► Resources/Social Supports

- *only* immediate family

► Stressors

- problem behavior makes mom depressed & dad angry
- avoid doing things in public
- financial stress due to father not working outside home

► Goals

- Amanda lives “normal” life
 - do things independently without parents’ constant attention/help
- Do things in community together as family
- Sisters get along better



Exercise 1. Contextual Fit Considerations

- Given family ecology assessment results for Amanda's family, what would be important **contextual fit considerations**?
- How would you:
 - Build on family strengths;
 - Build on child positive contributions;
 - Address family goals?



Exercise 1. Contextual Fit Considerations:

- Build on **strong marital partnership** by teaching **both** parents to effectively support Amanda in target routines
- During parent training, **highlight small, incremental progress** in Amanda's behavior
- Select target routines that address family goals
 - Teaching Amanda to **tolerate less parental attention**
 - Family going on **community outings together**

Illustration: Family Ecology Assessment Results

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 - to be patient,
 - to respect people with differences
 - to appreciate “little things”

► Resources/Social Supports

- *only* immediate family

► Stressors

- problem behavior makes mom depressed & dad angry
- avoid doing things in public
- financial stress due to father not working outside home

► Goals

- Amanda lives “normal” life
 - can do things independently
- Do things in community together as family
- Sisters get along better



Exercise 2. Family Centered Supports

- ▶ Given Family Ecology Assessment results for Amanda's Family, what **family-centered supports** would you recommend?
- ▶ How would you:
 - ▶ Incorporate or enhance resources/social supports
 - ▶ Diminish stressors?



Exercise 2. Family Centered Supports:

- Counseling support with counseling psychologist
- Stress management training
- Acquire respite care services
- Enhance social support: Parent support group



Part 2. Focused Assessment of Family Routines

► Purpose

- Identify valued but problematic family routines
- Prioritize routines for intervention
- Strategically decide where to begin intervention
 - Family routine most likely promote initial success
 - Pivotal routine that may promote spread of effect to other family routines
- Generate family vision of successful target routine(s)
- Given elements of target routine & broader ecology assessment results, ensure contextual fit of PBS plan



Part 2. Focused Assessment of Family Routines (continued)

- ▶ Theoretical links
 - ▶ Activity setting as unit of analysis (Vygotsky, 1978; Gallimore et al., 1993)
- ▶ **Key elements** of family activity settings (routines)
 - ▶ Time and place
 - ▶ People present
 - ▶ Materials and social resources
 - ▶ Tasks
 - ▶ Goals and values
- ▶ Family activity settings are promising “**workshops for change**” (Gallimore, 2005)



Benefits of Family Activity Setting (Routine) as Unit of Analysis

- ▶ Family's vision of a valued family routine is a **superordinate goal** that increases motivation and commitment to change process
- ▶ Knowledge of core elements of target routines **facilitates design of contextually appropriate PBS plan**
- ▶ Intervention in family routines **makes process of change more feasible** in rich and complex context of family life



Part 2. Focused Assessment of Family Routines (continued)

- ▶ List child's typical daily schedule
- ▶ Identify valued but problematic family routines
 - ▶ Home routines
 - ▶ Community routines
 - ▶ Home or community routines family no longer does
- ▶ Prioritize routines for intervention



Question Guide for Selecting Target Family Routines

1. How much change is required for routine to be successful?
2. How many people are involved in routine, and how many will need to make changes in their behaviour?
3. Should *both* parents be involved in change process at start, or should one parent start change process and other parent start later?
4. How much time and effort required?
5. Is there potential for reasonably quick success with minimal training and support?
6. Might successful intervention have positive impact on other areas of child and/or family's life?
7. Are there obstacles that may impede family progress?



Exercise 3. Selecting Priority Routines for Intervention

- ▶ Amanda's family selected the following routines for intervention and support:
 - ▶ Going grocery shopping
 - ▶ Going to bed and sleeping in own bed
 - ▶ Going to restaurant together as family
 - ▶ Parent dinner prep/child free time
- ▶ Given decision-rules for selecting routines, which might be **best choice for first target routine** to begin intervention and support?



Exercise 3. Selecting Priority Routines for Intervention

- ▶ Given decision-rules, which might be **best choice for first target routine** to begin intervention and support?



Exercise 3. Amanda's family selected following order of routines for intervention and support:

1. Parent dinner prep/child free time
2. Going to bed & sleeping in own bed alone
3. Going grocery shopping with Amanda
4. Going to restaurant together as family



Part 2. Focused Assessment of Family Routines (continued)

- ▶ Collaborate with family to define vision of successful target routines
- ▶ Key elements of routines
 - ▶ Time and place
 - ▶ People present
 - ▶ Material resources
 - ▶ Tasks for focus child and for each person in routine
 - ▶ Goals and values



Illustration: Family Vision of Child Free-Time/ Parent Dinner Prep Routine

- Time and place
 - 5:00 – 6:00 pm
 - Kitchen/dining area, and family room
- People present
 - Amanda, mother, father, older sister
- Material resources
 - Play materials, T.V., video player, music video
 - Stove, cookware, foods to prepare for dinner



Illustration: Family Vision of Child Free-Time/ Parent Dinner Prep Routine (continued)

- Tasks for focus child and each person in routine:
 - Amanda
 - Select play materials; play independently; remain in assigned area; put play materials away before supper begins
 - Mother
 - Help Amanda set up play activities; prepare supper, give minimal directions and supervision from kitchen
 - Father
 - Work in home office; sometimes help mom cook or take mom's place preparing supper
 - Sister
 - Do homework; if asked, help sister set-up play activity; provide encouragement to Amanda



Illustration: Family Vision of Child Free-Time/ Parent Dinner Prep Routine (continued)

- Goals and values:

- Amanda playing independently
- Mother enjoying preparing nice dinner
- Father and sister being able to work alone in their respective rooms
- Family functioning in more typical fashion



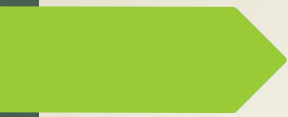
The Gold Ring: Technically Sound + Contextually Appropriate PBS Plan

A Metaphor in Animation

Metaphor Key

- ▶ Collaborative partnership
- ▶ Technically sound **and** contextually appropriate PBS plan
- ▶ Facilitative cognitions (e.g., confidence, self-efficacy)





Technically Sound **and** Contextually Appropriate PBS Plan



Technically Sound but *not* Contextually Appropriate



Child and Family Outcomes of Technically Sound & Contextually Appropriate PBS Plan





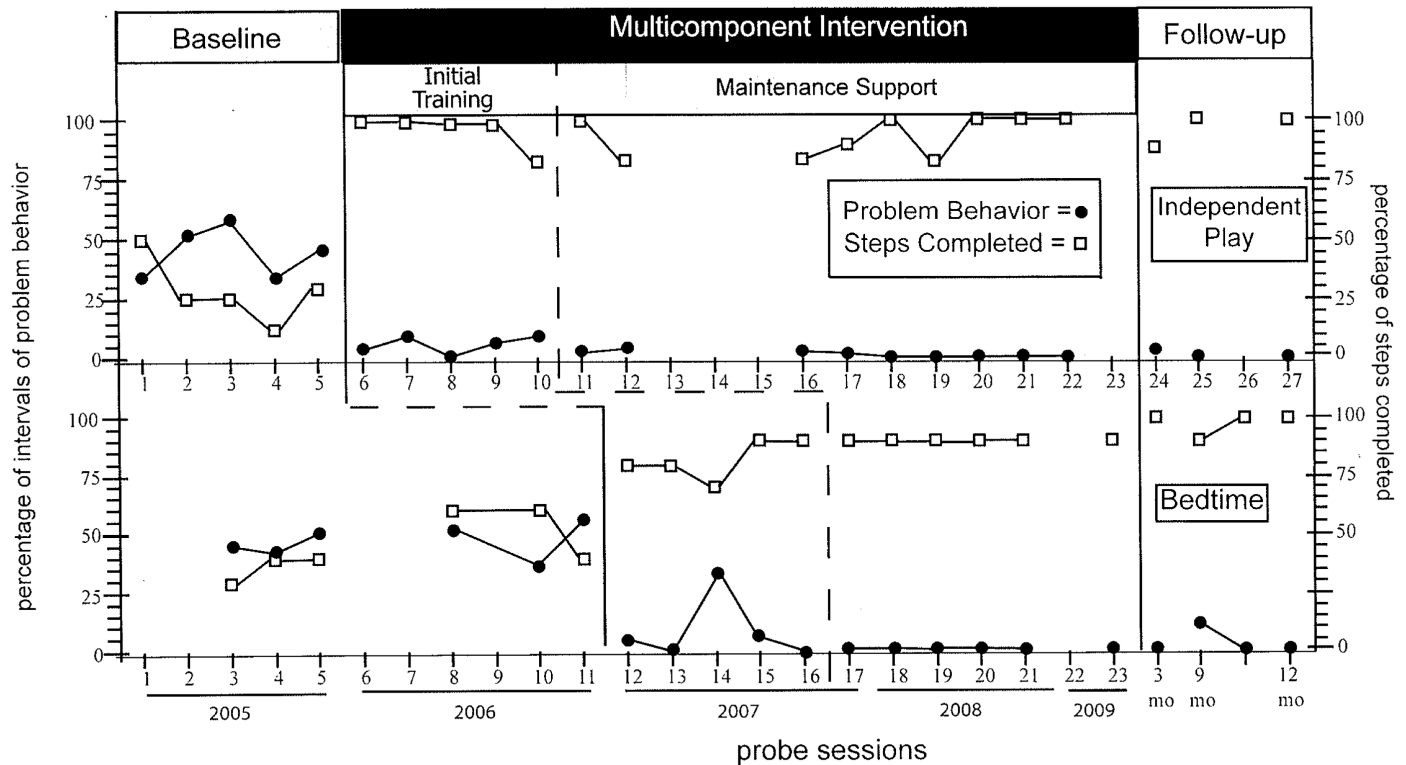
PBS Plan and Outcomes for Amanda and Family

Multiple Baseline Single Case Research
Design across Two Target Routines

PBS Plan for Dinner Prep/ Child Free Time Routine

Setting Event Strategies	Preventative Strategies	Teaching Strategies	Consequence Strategies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ensure that play materials are organized and kept in a clearly defined location ○ Limit meal prep time (gradually increase from 20 to 45 minutes) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Use choice board of preferred activities ○ Use first-then visual positive contingency ○ Use safety signal and timer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Use a visual self-management tool to teach Amanda to play independently while parent is preparing supper ○ Use direct instruction methods to expand Amanda's independent play repertoire ○ Teach Amanda to appropriately request parent's attention 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Give praise and attention contingent on independent play ○ Give attention contingent on Amanda asking politely ○ Minor challenging behaviour; Actively ignore and redirect to independent play; or prompt Amanda to ask for attention ○ Major challenging behaviour: Time self-out for 30 sec in adjacent room then redirect to independent play

Amanda & Family: Results for Challenging Behavior and Routine Steps Completed





Amanda's Mother's Poetic Point of view

- ▶ “These two routines – dinner prep/child free-time and going to bed – were like seeds in our family’s life. They have grown into – not a forest – but a garden which we continue to nurture.”

Cultivating a Flourishing Family Life



our family
and your love
must be
cultivated like a garden.
Time, effort, and imagination
must be summoned
constantly to keep any
relationship flourishing
and growing.

Jim Robn



Summary: Aims of Family Ecology Assessment

- Build collaborative partnership with family
- Select valued family routines for intervention and support
- Ensure PBS plan is contextually appropriate in addition to being technically sound
 - Build on family strengths & child positive contributions
 - Incorporate family resources and supports
 - Diminish stressors
- Identify family-focused supports