



Functional Behaviour Assessment (FBA)

A Tier 3 Process for Understanding Behaviour and Identifying Effective Supports

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Objectives: Part 1



Review ABC model of behaviour

Overview of the Functional Behaviour Assessment (FBA) process

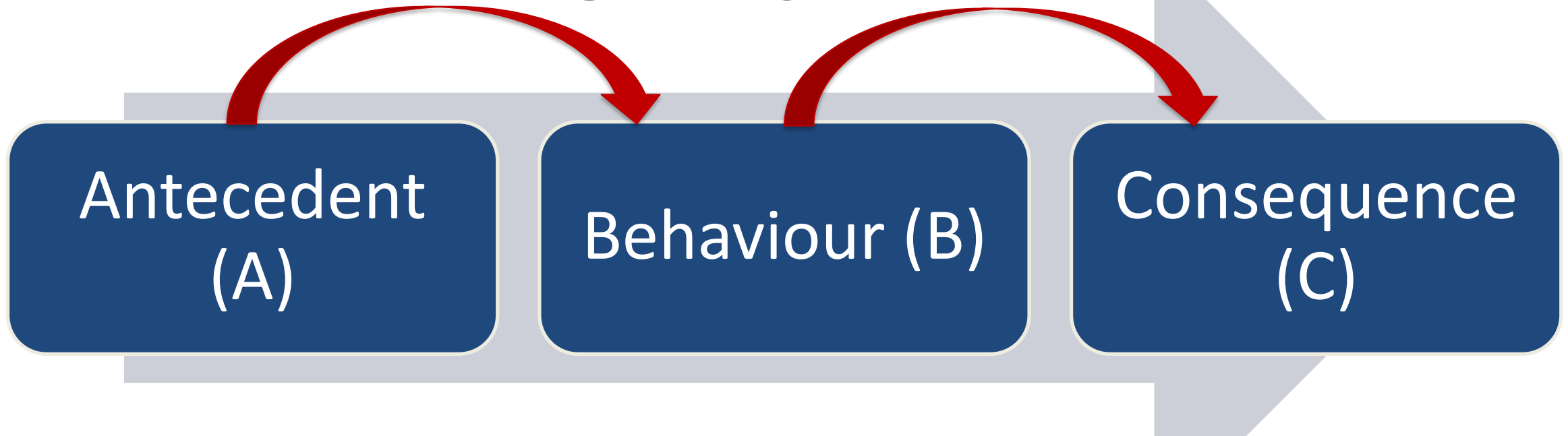
FBA procedures and data analysis to understand the function of a behaviour



A Review of the ABC Model of Behaviour



Understanding Why



If the relationship between the behaviour and consequence is strengthened in certain antecedent contexts, there is a maintaining contingency: +/- reinforcement

Maintaining Contingencies

Positive Reinforcement (+)

- Behaviour maintained by positive reinforcement is “access” behaviour
- The person gets something they want when they engage in the behaviour

Negative Reinforcement (-)

- Behaviour maintained by negative reinforcement is “escape” behaviour
- The person gets out of something they do not want (or postpone it) when they engage in the behaviour

Consequences are Direct or Socially Mediated

- Consequences can be direct or socially mediated
- Direct – the behaviour immediately produces the consequence
- Socially mediated – behaviour achieves its effect through someone else



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The Role of Motivation

- Motivation refers to how the rate of behaviour is affected by how much the person wants the consequence the behaviour produces
- Behaviour occurs when the person wants the consequence, and the consequence is available



Summary

- ✓ Behaviour is functional
- ✓ The consequence that follows a behaviour is what maintains that behaviour
- ✓ The person gets (+) or gets out of (-) something when they engage in the behaviour
- ✓ For a consequence to maintain behaviour, the person must want it
- ✓ The consequence can be direct or socially mediated



A photograph showing four hands of different skin tones cupping a bright red heart. The hands are positioned around the heart, with fingers pointing outwards, symbolizing care, support, and unity. The background is a light teal color.

A Statement of Values

- Behavioural support must be conducted with the dignity of the student as the primary concern.
- The goal is not just to eliminate the target behaviour, but to understand it to teach effective alternatives.
- The FBA is a process for looking at the relationship between behaviour and the environment.





Functional Behaviour Assessment (FBA)

Camille

- Third grade
- Behaviour – verbal refusal, destroying materials, kicking/hitting staff and peers
- Meeting grade level outcomes in Language Arts, adapted curriculum in Math



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Getting Started...

- Decide if an FBA is warranted
- Establish an FBA team
- Consider proactive strategies
- Collect baseline data



Camille

- **FBA is warranted** – Camille’s behaviour is interfering with her learning and learning of peers
- **FBA team** – classroom teacher, educational assistant, school guidance counsellor, vice principal, parents
- **Proactive strategies** – proximity to peers, assistance with math tasks
- **Baseline** – frequency data collected over 3 days; 6 occurrences of verbal refusal, 1 occurrence of destroying materials, 1 occurrence hitting adult, 1 occurrence kicking peer



Functional Behaviour Assessment (FBA)

FBA can be viewed as a 3-step process:

1. Gather information using indirect and direct methods
2. Analyze the information to formulate a hypothesis about the function of the target behaviour
3. Develop a behavioural support plan based on the function of the behaviour





Functional Behaviour Assessment (FBA)

1. Clear description of the target behaviour
2. Identify events, times, and situations that predict when the target behaviour will occur across daily routines
3. Identify the consequences that maintain the target behaviour
4. A summary that describes specific behaviours, a specific situation in which they occur, and the maintaining outcomes
5. Direct observation data that supports the summary statement



Methods for Collecting FBA Information

Indirect methods, also known as informant methods

- Interviews

Direct observation, see the behaviour as it happens

- Record data as the behaviour occurs



Interviewing Others

Interview those who work with or know the student well:

- Teachers
- Parents
- Support staff



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FBA Interview Forms

FBA	Describe the behaviour
Interview Forms	Define potential setting events
	Immediate antecedents
	Consequences or outcomes that may be maintaining the behaviour
	Frequency and duration of the behaviour
	Any other relevant information

FACTS

Functional Assessment Checklist for Teachers & Staff

- A brief, semi-structured interview
- Consists of two parts - an analysis of routines and the antecedents and consequences that occur during the routines where the behaviour occurs



Part A

Strengths and Target Behaviour

Strengths: Identify at least three strengths or contributions the learner brings to school.

Academic strengths:

Social/recreational strengths:

Other:

Problem Behaviour: Identify and describe the behaviour to be reduced or overcome (i.e., the target behaviour) in observable and measurable terms.



Camille: Strengths & Target Behaviour

Strengths

- Grade level achievement in language arts
- Interacts well with most peers
- Likes drawing & colouring

Target Behaviour

- Verbal refusal
- Destroying materials
- Bothering peers
- Hitting/kicking staff and peers



Routines Analysis

- Time
- Routine or activity
- Likelihood of target behaviour
- Specific behaviour
- Current intervention/response

Routines Analysis: Identify where, when and with whom the target behaviour is most likely to occur.

Schedule (Times)	Activity	Likelihood of Behaviour						Specific Behaviour	Current Intervention
		Low				High			
		1	2	3	4	5	6		
		1	2	3	4	5	6		
		1	2	3	4	5	6		
		1	2	3	4	5	6		

Camille: Routines Analysis

Time	Activity	Likelihood of Behaviour	Specific Behaviour	Current Intervention
8:15	Opening/silent reading (whole class, independent)	1		
8:45	Language Arts (sm. groups)	5	Hitting/kicking	Sit at table alone
9:45	Physical education (whole class)	1		
10:30	Recess	1		
10:45	Math (whole class, sm. groups, independent work)	6	Yelling, refusal, destroying materials, hitting/kicking	Redirection Sit at table alone
11:45	Lunch and recess	2		
12:30	Story time/reading response (whole class, sm. groups)	4	Hitting/kicking	Sit at table alone
1:30	Independent seat work	2		
2:30	Art, Music, Health (whole class)	2		

Prioritized Routine(s)

Prioritized Routine: Select a routine with a rating of 5 or 6. Only combine routines when there is significant similarity in activities (conditions), and target behaviour. Complete the remainder of Part A and Part B for the prioritized routine identified below.

	Routines/Activities/Contexts	Target Behaviour
Prioritized Routine #1		
Prioritized Routine #2		

**** If 3 or more routines are rated 5 or 6, consider seeking help from someone with training or experience with a complex FBA.**

Camille: Prioritized Routines

1. **Math** – rated as 6, most occurrences of behaviour during baseline

Target behaviour – yelling, destroying materials, hitting/kicking

2. **Story time and language arts** (combined routines) - same behaviour thought to serve same function in both

Target behaviour – hitting/kicking

Part B

PART B

Assessment of Routine #1: Provide more information about the target behaviour(s).

What does the behaviour look like?

How often does the behaviour occur?

How long does the behaviour last when it occurs?

What is the intensity/level of risk of the behaviour?



Camille: Routine #1

Behaviour – destroying materials, hitting/kicking adults, hitting/kicking peers

Frequency – at least once per day

Duration – brief, 1 hit/kick, destroys whatever item is on the desk (crumples/tears it up) then it is over

Intensity - moderate intensity, causes discomfort/pain, no injuries requiring medical treatment, no intrusive procedures required to date



Antecedents and Triggers

Antecedents- Triggers and Setting Events: What are the events that predict when the target behaviour will occur (predictors).

In this routine, what is most likely to trigger the target behaviour (i.e., what is the most common antecedent)?

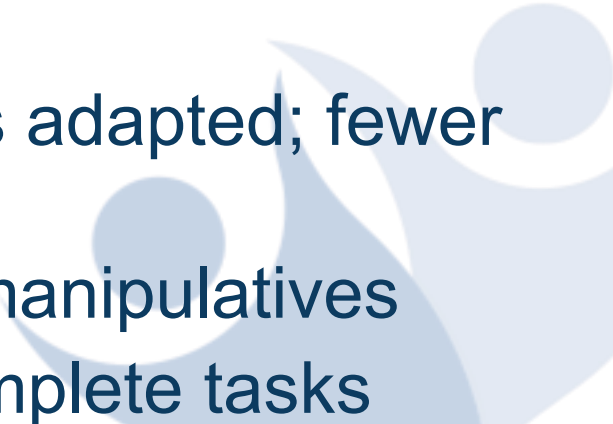
Does the target behaviour ever occur in the absence of this trigger?

Triggers		
<input type="checkbox"/> Tasks	<input type="checkbox"/> Reprimands	<input type="checkbox"/> Transitions
<input type="checkbox"/> Unstructured time/non-academic activities	<input type="checkbox"/> Structured/academic activities	<input type="checkbox"/> Alone/no attention or activities
Specific Features of the Trigger		
If tasks (e.g., group work, independent work, small-group instruction, lecture...)	Describe the task in detail (e.g., duration, level of difficulty), what features are likely aversive and why	
If unstructured time/non-academic tasks...	Describe the setting, activities, and who else is present.	
If reprimand...	Describe who delivers the reprimand, what is said, and why correction is given.	
If structured/academic tasks...	Describe the context, who is present, the activities, and what behaviours are expected	
If alone...	Describe where this occurs and any relevant features of the environment	



Camille: Antecedents for Routine #1

Triggers

- Independent math tasks at desk and small group math instruction (3-4 peers in group)
 - Usually require 5-10 questions on a page, answering questions in a group
 - Math is difficult (aversive) even though curriculum is adapted; fewer outcomes/outcomes from Gr. 2 curriculum
 - Activities include arithmetic, word problems, using manipulatives
 - Behaviour less likely if assistance is provided to complete tasks
- 

Setting Events

Setting Events: Is there something, that when present, make it more likely that the trigger will set off the target behaviour? If yes, is this event always present? Does the behaviour occur only when it is present?

Setting Events		
<input type="checkbox"/> Correction earlier in the day	<input type="checkbox"/> Hunger or thirst	<input type="checkbox"/> Change in routine/schedule
<input type="checkbox"/> Conflict with another person	<input type="checkbox"/> Lack of sleep	<input type="checkbox"/> Alone/no attention or activities
<input type="checkbox"/> Pain or discomfort	<input type="checkbox"/> Missed medication	<input type="checkbox"/> Other:

Consequences

Consequences: What consequences appear most likely to maintain the target behaviour?

When the target behaviour happens, what occurs next?

Would the behaviour still happen if that consequence did not occur?

What the Student Accesses		What the Student Escapes	
<input type="checkbox"/> Attention (from whom) <input type="checkbox"/> Activities (what activities) <input type="checkbox"/> Tangible items (what things) <input type="checkbox"/> Sensory experience (what experience) <input type="checkbox"/> Setting (what setting) <input type="checkbox"/> Other:		<input type="checkbox"/> Attention (from whom) <input type="checkbox"/> Activities or tasks (what activities) <input type="checkbox"/> Tasks (what tasks) <input type="checkbox"/> Sensory experience (what experience) <input type="checkbox"/> Setting (what setting) <input type="checkbox"/> Other:	
Specific Features of the Consequence			
If attention is obtained or avoided...		Describe who provides/withdraws the attention. How long the attention/withdrawal typically last? What does the student do after attention is given/withdrawn the attention? Does behaviour escalate?	
If an activity is accessed or an activity or task is avoided...		Describe the activity/task, including who else is present, what the activity/task consists of and how long it lasts.	
If a tangible item is accessed or avoided...		Describe the item, including who else is present, and how long the student has access to/avoids the item.	
If a sensory experience is accessed or avoided...		Describe the context, who else is present, what activities are going on, and what behaviors are expected.	
If something else is accessed or avoided...		Describe what is accessed or avoided, the context, who else is present, and what behaviour is expected.	

Camille: Consequences for Routine

#1

Consequence that follows the behaviour – verbal redirection (destroying materials), sent to sit at a table alone (hitting/kicking), adult re-engages with her after a few minutes

Possible function – adult attention (redirection/assistance with tasks), avoid/delay tasks when destroying materials, avoid/delay tasks when removed from group, avoid interaction with peers when removed from group



Interviewing the Student

- When appropriate, include in the process to the extent possible
- Depends on their interest, availability, willingness, and ability to engage in conversation.



Interviewing the Student

- Describe a typical day.
- What are the things that you do that get you into trouble or are a problem?
- What are the times and classes when this is most likely to happen?
- Are there situations that make things worse?



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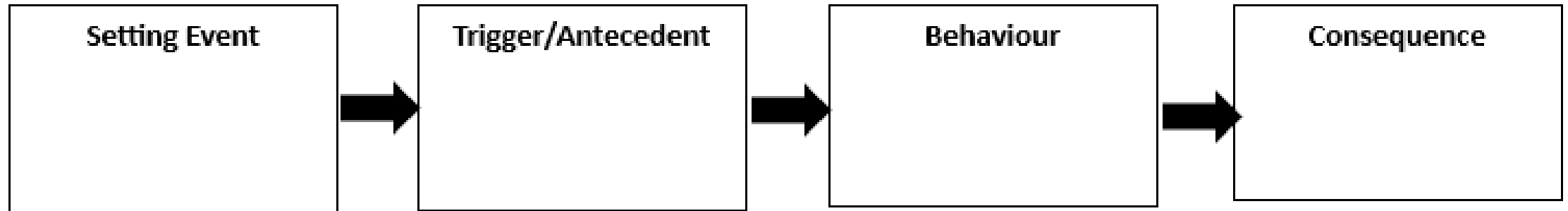
Camille – Student Interview

- Camille was able to generally describe her daily schedule.
- She was hesitant to talk about the things that get her into trouble and needed frequent redirection to focus on her behaviour rather than the behaviour of others.
- She did identify **3 peers** who she said “make her mad”
- Camille stated repeatedly that she dislikes **math** because it is hard.
- She also indicated that she “gets into more trouble” when she is already mad.

Interview Summary

Summary of Behaviour

Summarize information about the target behaviour for this routine.



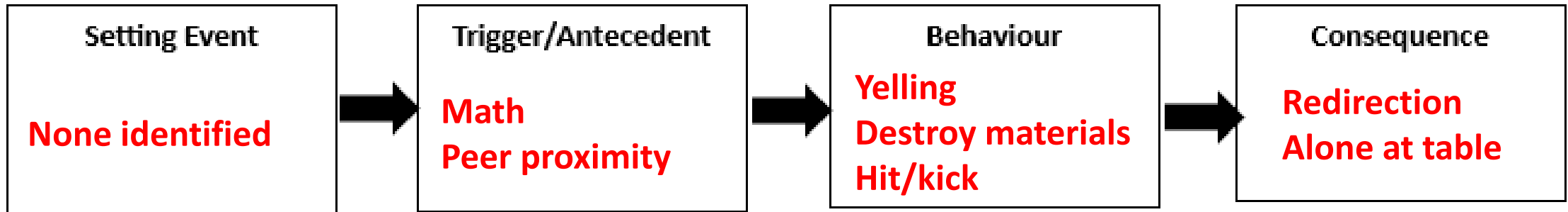
How confident are you that the summary is accurate?



Interview Summary for Camille

Summary of Behaviour

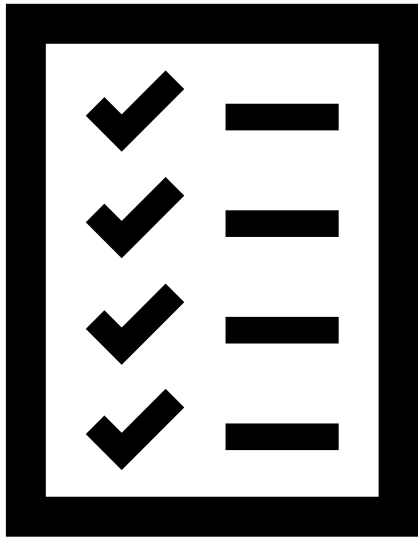
Summarize information about the target behaviour for this routine.



How confident are you that the summary is accurate?



Direct Observation



- Record data on the A-B-Cs
- Across as many settings and times of day as possible and relevant
- By those directly in contact with the student, or someone unfamiliar to the student
- Collect data until a clear pattern emerges

ABC Checklist for Direct Observation

Date:

Setting:

Behaviour:

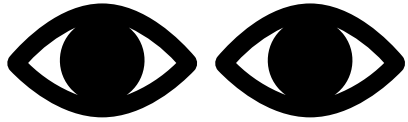
Time	Antecedent	Behaviour	Consequence
	<input type="checkbox"/> Demand/request <input type="checkbox"/> Difficult task <input type="checkbox"/> Transition <input type="checkbox"/> Interruption <input type="checkbox"/> Alone (no attention) <input type="checkbox"/> Other	<input type="checkbox"/> Withdrawal <input type="checkbox"/> Aggression <input type="checkbox"/> Other	<input type="checkbox"/> Access to attention <input type="checkbox"/> Access to item/activity <input type="checkbox"/> Access sensory <input type="checkbox"/> Escape demand/request <input type="checkbox"/> Escape task <input type="checkbox"/> Avoid person <input type="checkbox"/> Other

ABC Checklist for Camille

Student: **Camille** **Setting:** **Gr. 3 classroom &**

Time	Antecedent	Behaviour	Consequence	Notes
	<input type="checkbox"/> Demand/request <input type="checkbox"/> Difficult task <input type="checkbox"/> Transition <input type="checkbox"/> Interruption <input type="checkbox"/> Alone (no attention) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: Proximity of peers <input type="checkbox"/> Other: Math tasks	<input type="checkbox"/> Yelling <input type="checkbox"/> Destroying materials <input type="checkbox"/> Hit/kick adult <input type="checkbox"/> Hit/kick peer <input type="checkbox"/> Other	<input type="checkbox"/> Access to attention <input type="checkbox"/> Access to item/activity <input type="checkbox"/> Access sensory <input type="checkbox"/> Escape demand/request <input type="checkbox"/> Escape task <input type="checkbox"/> Avoid person <input type="checkbox"/> Other	

How to Record Observations



When target behaviour occurs:

- Note time
- Check relevant antecedents, behaviour, and consequence same row
- Record bursts of behaviour as 1 incident
- Note if behaviour does not occur during an observation

Training Staff to Record Data

Train staff before data recording begins

- Describe the sections of the form and how they are used
- Provide practice on recording on the form before observation begins
- Include information on the logistics of observing, writing on the form, where forms are to be stored, the planned schedule of recording
- Provide support after recording begins



ABC Observation Data for Camille

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3
<p>8:34 – Silent reading Yelling Alone at a table (reading to self) Verbally redirected to reading Function – attention</p>	<p>8:40 – Opening activity Yelling and hitting peer Small group activity at table (working with peers on task) Verbally redirected and sent to sit at table alone Function – attention and escape peer</p>	<p>11:40 – Math Destroying materials Math group (independent math activity) Verbally redirected (new materials provided) Function – escape task</p>
<p>9:50 – Going to PE Kicking peer Walking in line with peers (peer spoke to her) Moved to end of line Function – escape peer</p>	<p>10:48 – Math Yelling and destroying materials Independent task (independent math activity) Verbally redirected Function –escape task</p>	<p>12:15 – Lunch Hitting peer Eating lunch in cafeteria (peer spoke to her) Sat at a table alone Function – escape peer</p>
<p>11:15 –Math Destroying materials and hitting EA Independent work (worksheet) Verbally redirected Function – escape task</p>	<p>12:45 – Story time Hitting EA Small group activity at table (listening to peer read) Verbally redirected Function – attention</p>	<p>2:45 – Art Yelling Alone at table (independent art project) Verbally redirected Function – attention</p>
<p>2:10 – Independent work period Yelling Alone at table (cut & paste task) Ignored (no response from teacher or peers) Function – attention</p>	<p>1:42 – Independent work period Yelling Alone at table (reading comprehension activity) Verbally redirected Function – attention</p>	

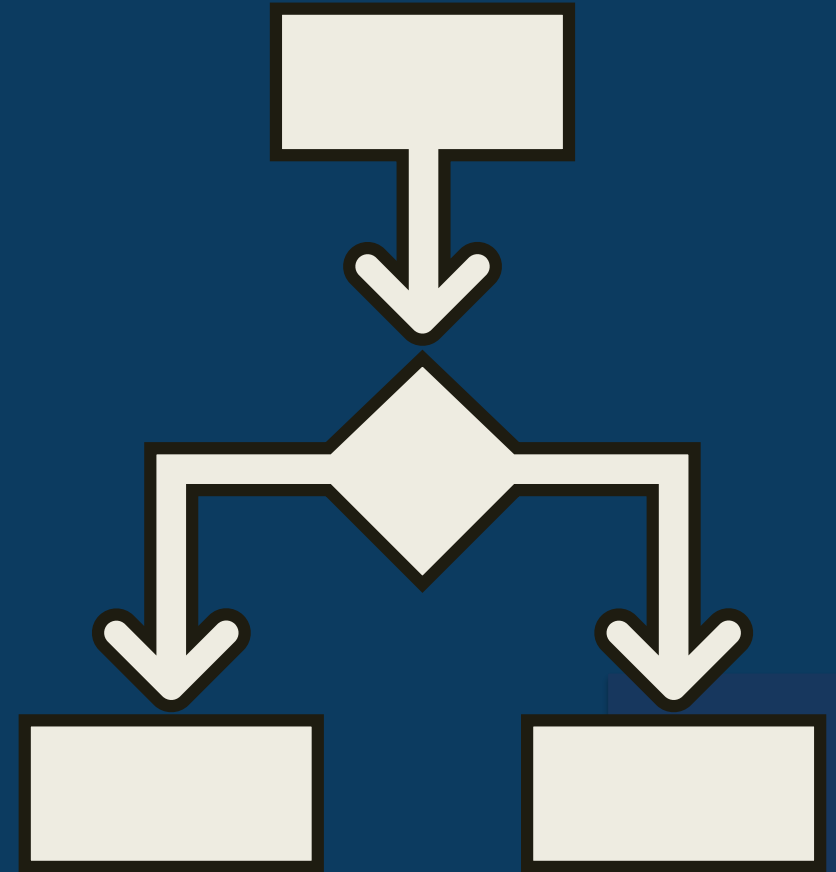
Interpreting Observation Data

- Describe behaviours and any consistent relationship or patterns among
- Analyze antecedents to identify situations that consistently predict when the target behaviour *will* and *will not* occur
- Determine the function of the target behaviour
- Confirm or revise initial summary statements



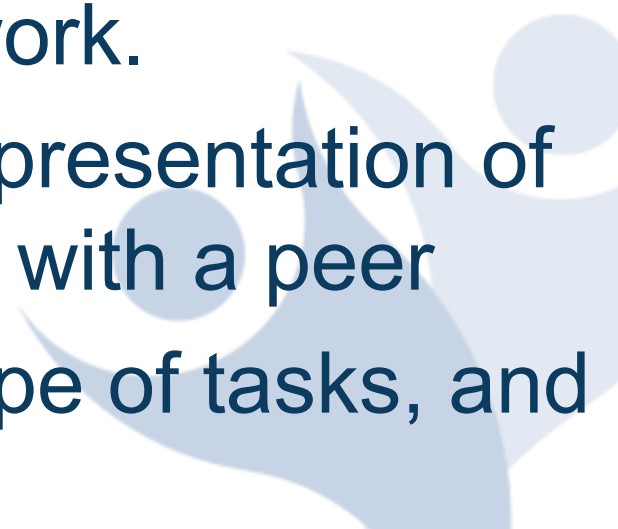
Decision Making

- Gather more data
- Begin developing the behaviour support plan



Decision Re: Camille's Data

The team decided to move forward with planning of the behaviour support plan

- Contexts where behaviour occurred included math class, small group instruction, and independent work.
 - Immediate antecedents were being alone, presentation of independent math work, and an interaction with a peer
 - Possible functions included attention, escape of tasks, and escape from peers
- 

FBA Summary Statement

Summary of Behaviour

Summarize information about the target behaviour for this routine.

```
graph LR; A[Setting Event] --> B[Trigger/Antecedent]; B --> C[Behaviour]; C --> D[Consequence]
```

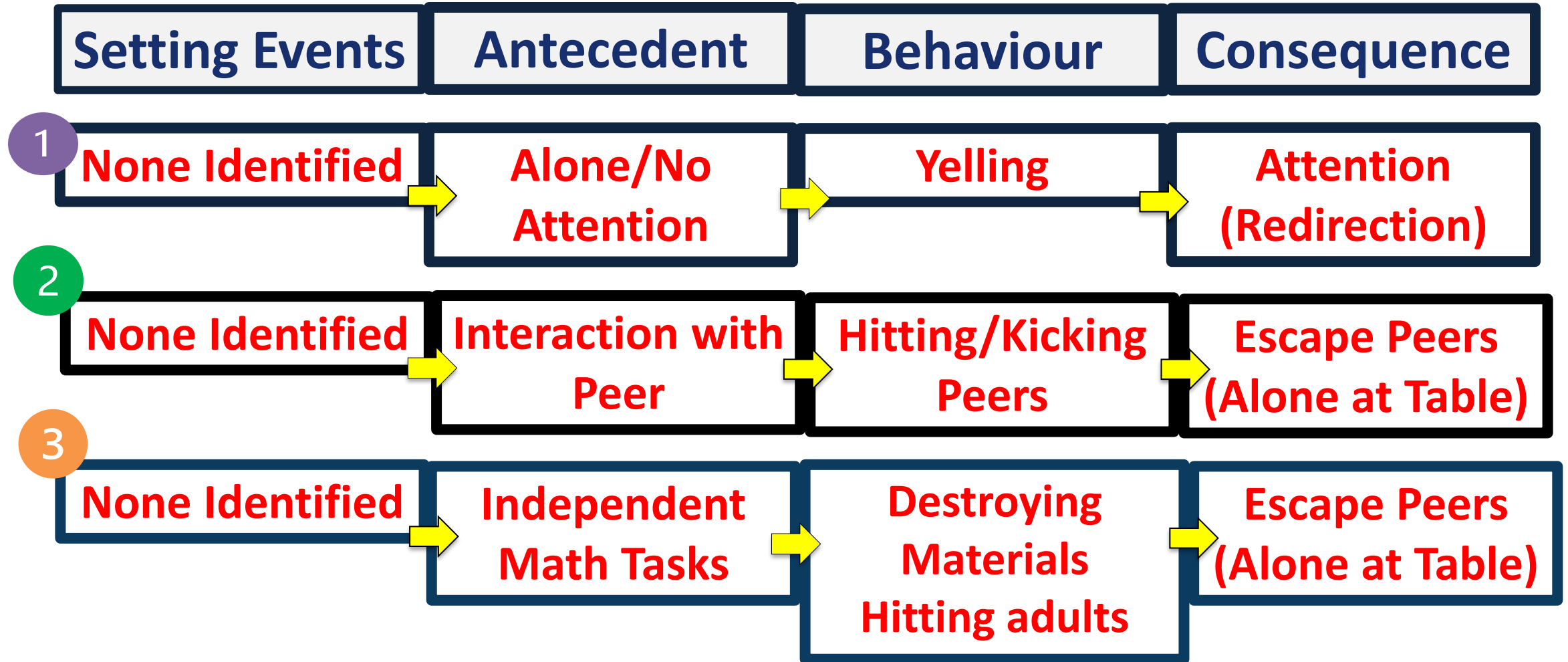
How confident are you that the summary is accurate?

Low Confidence						High Confidence
1	2	3	4	5	6	

Guidelines

- Behaviour
- Time periods when behaviour occurs and antecedents
- Perceived function and actual consequences
- Initial summary valid

FBA Summary for Camille





Building Behaviour Support Plans

Considerations

Behaviour support plans should:

- Define what staff will do differently to alter the student's pattern of behaviour
- Be based on the outcome of FBA
- Be technically sound
- Make the target behaviour irrelevant, inefficient, and ineffective
- Fit the setting where they will be implemented



Selecting Behavioural Supports

- Collaborate with those who will be implementing the plan BEFORE writing it
- Use a competing behaviour pathway
- Select specific strategies that will make up the behaviour support plan



Summary of the FBA Process

FBA Data
Collection

Interviews

Direct observation

Data
Analysis

Triggers/antecedents

Consequences

Summary
Statement

When (context) and (trigger), (behaviour occurs) because (function)





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