

Working With Behavioural Problems Affecting Stroke Survivors

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Behaviour has 3 basic components



Antecedent

- Happens before a behaviour
- Can be seen as the “trigger”
- It can be environmental or from the Central Nervous System

Behaviour

- Occurs as a result of the antecedent.
- Behaviours are overt.

Consequence

- A positive consequence or reinforcement will most likely cause the behaviour to occur again. A positive consequence can be verbal praise or humour or attention or something tangible.
- Punishment is not an effective tool as it can result in avoidance behaviours or anger. It does not result in a positive co-operative environment or enable individual responsibility or learning opportunities.

How to change behaviour

- Antecedents and consequences are what determine if the behaviour will happen again in the future. In most cases the antecedent is hard to figure out and may take observation and data to determine. As a result the best place to introduce change is in the consequence and it's most likely our behaviour that will need to change.

Possible challenges for stroke survivors

- Frustration
- Apathy
- Fear of falling
- Shouting/screaming
- Unrealistic demands for attention
- Lack of awareness or agnosia
- Depression
- Confusion
- Memory problems
- Perseveration

Possible challenges for stroke survivors

- Impulsivity
- Distractibility (attention)
- Problems with Executive Function
 - disorganized
 - inability to plan
- Social inappropriateness
- Poor insight regarding disability
- Inability to correct mistakes
- Anxiety
- Lability (laughing or crying when it does not seem appropriate to the situation)
- Anger management difficulties or aggression

Strategies

- Pain, hunger, sleep – behavioural change is not likely to occur when these are being experienced by the survivor
- Redirection- The “art” of changing a subject or the activity.
- 8 positive words (or more) strategy when providing feedback.

Strategies

- Give choices (Try to not say “NO”)
- Catch them doing well and reinforce
- Be motivational, and try to instill confidence
- Be respectful
- Be aware of how you are presenting issues and how they can act as antecedents. Instead of saying you can't do this because it would be dangerous for you try saying “I would appreciate it if you did not do this because I am concerned about you.”
- Be consistent – when you decide on a strategy as a means to help with a specific behaviour stick to it and have others do the same.

Strategies

- Don't talk down to individuals. They may have changes – now labile, or incontinent, or flat effect. Changes are due to stroke.
- When you can't determine the purpose of a behaviour try extinction by ignoring it.

In Conclusion

- Understand the behaviour
- Reinforce what's going well
- Be respectful and show dignity
- Remain emotionally uninvolved
- Don't take it personally

References

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References

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