

## Description of Training and Support for Building Organizational Capacity to Address Severe Problem Behavior

*When/Where:*

*Contact:*

*Seminar Presenter:*

*Lead Consultant:*

### Goals of the Training and Consultation:

- (a) To support the organization's/school's professionals and staff in understanding the evidence behind and rationale for a practical functional assessment and treatment approach for safely and humanely addressing severe problem behavior.
- (b) To build capacity of the organization's/school's professionals and staff to safely implement practical functional assessment procedures including functional analyses and to efficiently develop replacement repertoires via the skill-based treatment process for children/clients currently being served by the organization/school.
- (c) To produce socially meaningful outcomes for at least three clients served by the organization who currently engage in severe problem behavior.

*In other words, children and clients and their families are helped while organizational capacity is being built.*

### Day 1 ON-SITE SEMINAR

**General title:** Practical Functional Assessment and Treatment of Severe Problem Behavior

**Suggested Time:** 8:30-4:30 (1-hr lunch and two 15-min breaks = 6.5 hours of on-task time = 7 CEUs)

*Morning:*

**Title:** Functional Assessment of Severe Problem Behavior: A Focus on a Safe, Fast, & Effective Process

**Abstract:** Behavioral intervention can be effective for addressing problem behavior like meltdowns, self-injury, and aggression, especially when a functional assessment of the problem is conducted to determine why the problem behavior is occurring. A number of myths regarding the functional assessment process, which appear to be pervasive within different research and practice communities, will be reviewed in the context of a series of empirical evaluations demonstrating the effectiveness and social validation of a particular functional assessment process. Through lecture, interactive discussion,

and role play, attendees should be able to conduct interviews to discover synthesized reinforcement contingencies that may be influencing problem behavior and design and implement safe, fast, and effective functional analyses from interviews.

**Objectives:**

1. An attendee should be able to describe the conditions under which the different types of functional assessment (closed and open-ended indirect assessments, formal and informal descriptive assessments, functional analyses) should and should not be used when attempting to understand why problem behavior is occurring.
2. An attendee will be able to describe multiple tactics to improve the safety and efficiency of the functional assessment process, especially the functional analysis part of the process.
3. An attendee will be able to describe various tactics for efficiently determining whether different topographies of problem behavior are influenced by the same reinforcing contingency.
4. An attendee should be able to defend the practice of relying on synthesized reinforcement contingencies when functionally analyzing problem behavior and articulate the advantages of functional control over functional classification.

*Afternoon:*

**Title:** Treating Severe Problem Behavior: A Focus on Strengthening Socially Important Behavior

**Abstract:** The success of treatments for problem behaviors like meltdowns, self-injury, or aggression is largely dependent on whether the treatment is based on the function the problem behavior serves for the person with autism. But because of the seemingly obligatory focus on detecting the impact of single variables in good behavior analytic research, effective behavioral technology is often fractured across studies, resulting in a dearth of studies showing socially valid improvements in these problem behaviors and an absence of studies illustrating the treatment process from start to finish. In this session, an effective, comprehensive, and parent-validated treatment process for problem behavior will be described. The comparative research that underscores the importance of focusing on the skills of communication, toleration, and contextually appropriate behavior will be reviewed. The logistics of implementing this treatment in a variety of contexts that differ in personnel will be discussed.

**Objectives:**

1. An attendee will be able to describe strategies for teaching individuals with severe problem behavior to engage in an omnibus communication response and then procedures for differentiating the response so that a communication repertoire is established.
2. An attendee will be able to describe the key components of strategies for teaching individuals with severe problem behavior to tolerate both delays to and denials of reinforcers previously maintaining their problem behavior.
3. An attendee should be able to describe how contextually appropriate behavior (compliance, independent academic work and play) may be shaped and maintained during variable and sometimes long delays to the reinforcers that historically maintained problem behavior

## **Day 2 ON-SITE IMPLEMENTATION SUPPORT**

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**Title:** Implementing the PFA process with students/clients served by sponsoring organization

**Process:**

1. After reviewing the results of open-ended interviews with teachers and behavior specialists, the team will collaborate on designing analyses for 3 students/clients.
2. The analyses will be implemented by the sponsoring organization's BCBA's, behavior specialists, or teachers with on-site coaching from an FTF Consultant. The results will be plotted and interpreted, and subsequent analyses will be designed if the initial analyses does not strongly influence problem behavior. Skill-based treatment will be initiated and progressed as time allows.
3. The group will reflect on implemented PFA processes, treatments will be designed from the results of the analyses, and the logistics of the collaborative implementation process will be discussed and agreed upon.

**Objectives:**

Review implementation details to enhance the speed, safety, and efficacy of PFA and SBT implementation and successfully design and implement functional analyses for target children/clients that yield strong influence of problem behavior (and serve as an effective baseline from which life skills can be taught).

## **WEEKLY FOLLOW-UP SUPPORT**

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Consults are scheduled at a set weekly time, Monday-Wednesday, start at 10 min past the hour to allow for a 10-min additional review of any sent materials, will last for 35 min or less, and will end with a 15-min period in which the consultant will document progress and/or send additional supporting materials. The FTF Lead consultant will host the meeting via Zoom software and will send out weekly invitations with a meeting link (consultees need no particular software). The number of meetings and their distribution is determined by the implementation model that works best for the sponsoring organization.

Up to three implementors from the same company and up to three cases can be supported in each weekly meeting. The Lead Consultant is not able to provide consult on cases that are outside of the scope of the assessment and treatment processes reviewed in the initial trainings. New clients are added to the meetings following a socially validated outcome for a participating child or client.

All FTF Lead Consultants are employees of FTF (not subcontractors) and board certified behavior analysts who have published studies in peer-reviewed journals focused on the processes we support. All either have earned their doctoral degree or are in their final term of their doctoral program. All FTF Lead Consultants meet on a weekly basis to discuss the clients, so all FTF Consultants collaboratively support consultees in addition to the Lead Consultant facilitating progress in the scheduled weekly meetings.

Company website: [www.ftfbc.com](http://www.ftfbc.com)

Resource website: <http://practicalfunctionalassessment.com/>

## References:

### Concerns with functional assessment typically applied:

Hanley, G. P. (2012). Functional assessment of problem behavior: Dispelling myths, overcoming implementation obstacles, and developing new lore. *Behavior Analysis in Practice, 5*, 54-72.

### Practical Functional Assessment (PFA) and Skills based Treatment (SBT) first described (clinic model):

Hanley, G. P., Jin, C. S., Vanselow, N. R., & Hanratty, L. A. (2014). Producing meaningful improvements in problem behavior of children with autism via synthesized analyses and treatments. *JABA, 47*, 16-36.

### Initial replications of PFA process across contexts and participant demographics:

Jessel, J., Hanley, G. P., & Ghaemmaghani, M. (2016). Interview-informed synthesized contingency analyses: Thirty replications and reanalysis. *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis, 49*, 576-595.

### Initial replication of PFA and SBT processes in home and classroom contexts:

Santiago, J. L., Hanley, G. P., Moore, K., & Jin, C. S. (2016). The generality of interview-informed functional analyses: Systematic replications in school and home. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders, 46*, 797-811.

### Detailed analyses and descriptions of how to teach functional communication and "waiting" skills:

Ghaemmaghani, M., Hanley, G. P., Jessel, J. & Landa, R. (2018). Shaping complex functional communication responses. *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis, 51*, 502-520.

Ghaemmaghani, M., Hanley, G. P., & Jessel, J. (2016). Contingencies promote delay tolerance. *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis, 49*, 548-575.

### Comparative analysis and literature review illustrating importance of synthesized reinforcement contingencies:

Slaton, J. D., Hanley, G. P. & Raftery, K. J. (2017). Interview-informed functional analyses: A comparison of synthesized and isolated components. *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis, 50*, 252-277.

Slaton, J. D. and Hanley, G. P. (2018), Nature and scope of synthesis in functional analysis and treatment of problem behavior. *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis, 51*, 943-973.

### Additional replications of the PFA and SBT process:

Strand, R. C. W., and Eldevik, S. (2016). Improvements in problem behavior in a child with autism spectrum diagnosis through synthesized analysis and treatment: A replication in an EIBI home program. *Behavioral Interventions, 33*, 102-111.

Herman, C., Healy, O., & Lydon, S. (2018). An interview-informed synthesized contingency analysis to inform the treatment of challenging behavior in a young child with autism. *Developmental Neurorehabilitation, 21*, 202-207.

Jessel, J., Ingvarsson, E. T., Metras, R., Kirk, H. & Whipple, R. (2018). Achieving socially significant reductions in problem behavior following the interview-informed synthesized contingency analysis: A summary of 25 outpatient applications. *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis, 51*, 130-157.

Taylor, S. A., Phillips, K. J., & Gertzog, M. G. (2018). Use of synthesized analysis and informed treatment to promote school reintegration. *Behavioral Interventions*. Online version: <https://doi.org/10.1002/bin.1640>

Beaulieu, L., Van Nostrand, M.E., Williams, A.L., & Herscovitch, B. (2018). Incorporating interview-informed functional analyses into practice. *Behavior Analysis in Practice*.

Rose, J. C. & Beaulieu, L. (2018). Assessing the generality and durability of interview-informed functional analyses and treatment. *JABA*. doi:10.1002/jaba.504

Jessel, J., Hanley, G. P., Ghaemmaghami, M., & Metras, R. (2018). An evaluation of the single-session interview-informed synthesized contingency analysis. *Behavioral Interventions*. 1–17. <https://doi.org/10.1002/bin.1650>

Jessel, J. , Metras, R. , Hanley, G. P., Jessel, C., & Ingvarsson, E. T. (2019). Evaluating the boundaries of analytic efficiency and control: A consecutive controlled case series of 26 functional analyses. *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis*. doi:10.1002/jaba.544

Ferguson, J. L., Leaf, J. A., Cihon, J. H., Milne, C. M., Leaf, J. B., McEachin, J., & Leaf, R. (in press). Practical functional assessment: A case study replication and extension with a child diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder. *Education and Treatment of Children*.

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