



INSIGHT AND CHANGE THROUGH BEHAVIORAL ANALYSIS

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BEHAVIORAL CHAIN ANALYSIS

- AKA: Behavior analysis, chain analysis, or BCA
- Purpose: To understand all the factors that lead to a problem behavior and keep it in place. Understanding causes works better than judging.

Other Analyses:

- Solution Analysis: Identifying solutions to result in a different behavior
- Task Analysis: How will this particular person implement these particular skills given her particular circumstances
- Missing Links Analysis: Identifying what was missing when a behavior didn't happen

STRUCTURE OF A BCA

- Begin with Target Behavior (often a behavior tracked on a diary card)
- Then, go back and identify the Prompting Event
- Go a step further back and identify Vulnerabilities
- Complete the chain between the Prompting Event and the Target Behavior
 - Identify links: events, thoughts, feelings, and behaviors
- Identify Contingencies of the Problem Behavior
- For each step, focus on exquisite detail of each link in the chain.

Vulnerabilities

Prompting
Event

Links: Thoughts, Emotions,
Behaviors, Events

Problem
Behavior

Contingencies

Vuln: Drinking,
late at night

GF rejects
intimacy

Hurt,
sadness

Anger

Yells at
GF

Shame/ Self-
hatred

Cutting

Compassion from
GF

Emotion
Regulation

GF rejects
intimacy

Hurt,
sadness

Mindfulness

Emotional
Expression

Self-
Validation

Distress
Tolerance

Compassion from
GF

CASE EXAMPLE: ROLE PLAY

- Volunteer? Play your client

EXERCISE

- Pair up with someone you don't know.
- On your own, identify a client and a problem behavior that this client has exhibited. If you prefer, you can also use one of your own behaviors.
- To the best of your ability, conduct a chain analysis of that problem behavior. If you are not sure of all the links in the chain, make educated guesses. Mark your guesses with question marks.
- Identify each link in the chain as positive (moving away from the problematic behavior) or negative (moving toward the problematic behavior).

EXERCISE

- Select someone to go first. If you are going first, present your chain analysis to your partner. Partners, practice validation. Communicate what make sense and what you appreciate.
- Ask, “What am I missing?” Partners, offer feedback with kindness and respect.

Vulnerabilities

Prompting
Event

Links: Thoughts, Emotions,
Behaviors, Events

Problem
Behavior

Contingencies

FOUR FACTORS OF PROBLEM BEHAVIORS

1. Problematic Emotional Response
2. Problematic Cognitive Process
3. Skills Deficit
4. Problematic Contingencies

FOUR CHANGE STRATEGIES FOR PROBLEM BEHAVIORS

1. Problematic Emotional Response

- Exposure

2. Problematic Cognitive Process

- Cognitive Modification

3. Skills Deficit

- Skills Training

4. Problematic Contingencies

- Contingency Management

EXERCISE

- Review your chain analysis. For all of the negative links in the chain, identify what kind of factor it is. Then, identify the corresponding change strategy for that factor.
- Identify three specific action steps that you want to take with this client. Consider these possible steps:
 - Clarifying one of the educated guesses you made with your client. Were you right? If not, what did you learn?
 - Implementing one of the change strategies you identified.
- Present these ideas to your partner. Partners, focus on validation and appreciation.
- Ask, “What am I missing?” Partners, offer feedback with kindness and respect.

Vulnerabilities

Prompting
Event

Links: Thoughts, Emotions,
Behaviors, Events

Problem
Behavior

Contingencies

Four Factors of Problem Behaviors

1. Problematic Emotional Response
 - Exposure
2. Problematic Cognitive Process
 - Cognitive Modification
3. Skills Deficit
 - Skills Training
4. Problematic Contingencies
 - Contingency Management

MOVING FORWARD

- Identify prevention strategies to help avoid vulnerabilities in the future.
- Identify skillful behavior that will help to avoid the problem behavior.
- Identify repairs that will address any negative consequence of the problem behavior.

REPAIRS

- Identify the actual negative consequences of your behavior.
- Repair the harm or distress that you caused to others or to yourself. Repair failure with success, not with constant berating of yourself or constant apologies.
- Consider whether overcorrection would be effective.

MISSING LINKS ANALYSIS

1. Did you know to do the behavior?
2. Were you willing to do the behavior?
3. Did you remember to do the behavior at the right time?
4. Did something interfere with doing the behavior when you remembered?

MISSING LINKS ANALYSIS

1. Did you know to do the behavior?

Clearer communication of task, paying more attention

2. Were you willing to do the behavior?

VITALS skills for Motivation, Pros and Cons, practicing willingness

3. Did you remember to do the behavior at the right time?

Calendar, alert on phone, physical cue (e.g., meditation bracelet)

4. Did something interfere with doing the behavior when you remembered?

Problem-solve around cognitions, rewards, potential obstacles, etc.