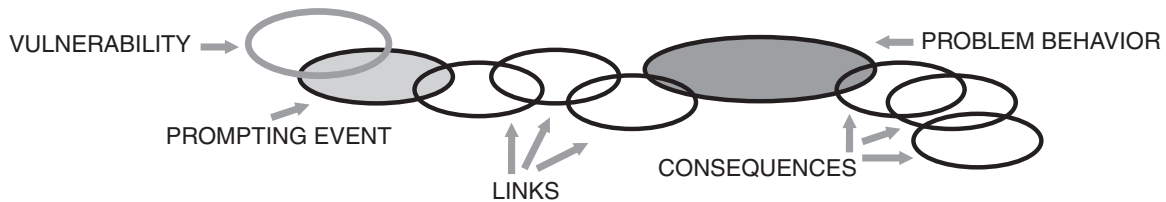


# GENERAL HANDOUT 7

(General Worksheets 2, 2a)

## Chain Analysis

TO UNDERSTAND BEHAVIOR, DO A CHAIN ANALYSIS.



**Step 1:** Describe the **PROBLEM BEHAVIOR**.

**Step 2:** Describe the **PROMPTING EVENT** that started the chain of events leading to the problem behavior.

**Step 3:** Describe the factors happening before the event that made you **VULNERABLE** to starting down the chain of events toward the problem behavior.

**Step 4:** Describe in excruciating detail the **CHAIN OF EVENTS** that led to the problem behavior.

**Step 5:** Describe the **CONSEQUENCES** of the problem behavior.

### To change behavior:

**Step 6:** Describe **SKILLFUL** behaviors to replace problem links in the chain of events.

**Step 7:** Develop **PREVENTION PLANS** to reduce vulnerability to stressful events.

**Step 8:** **REPAIR** important or significant consequences of the problem behavior.

## Chain Analysis, Step by Step

1. **Describe the specific PROBLEM BEHAVIOR** (overeating or overdrinking, yelling at your kids, throwing a chair, having an overwhelming emotional outburst, dissociating, not coming or coming late to skills training, putting off or refusing to do skills practice, etc.).
  - A. Be very specific and detailed. No vague terms.
  - B. Identify exactly what *you did, said, thought, or felt* (if feelings are the targeted problem behavior). Identify what *you did not do*.
  - C. Describe the intensity of the behavior and other characteristics of the behavior that are important.
  - D. Describe the problem behavior in enough detail that an actor in a play or movie could recreate the behavior exactly.
  - E. If the behavior is something *you did not do*, ask yourself whether (a) you did not know you needed to do it (it did not get into short-term memory); (b) you forgot it and later it never came into your mind to do it (it did not get into long-term memory); (c) you put it off when you did think of it; (d) you refused to do it when you thought of it; or (e) you were willful and rejected doing it, or some other behavior, thoughts, or emotions interfered with doing it. If (a) or (b) is the case, skip from here to Step 6 below (working on solutions). Otherwise, keep going from here.
  
2. **Describe the specific PROMPTING EVENT** that started the whole chain of behavior. Begin with the environmental event that started the chain. Always begin with some event in your environment, even if it doesn't seem to you that the environmental event "caused" the problem behavior. Otherwise, we could ask about any behavior, thought, feeling, or experience, "What prompted that?" Possible questions to help you get at this are:
  - A. What exact event precipitated the start of the chain reaction?
  - B. When did the sequence of events that led to the problem behavior begin? When did the problem start?
  - C. What was going on right before the thought of or impulse for the problem behavior occurred?
  - D. What were you doing/thinking/feeling/imagining at that time?
  - E. Why did the problem behavior happen on that day instead of the day before?
  
3. **Describe specific VULNERABILITY FACTORS** happening before the prompting event. What factors or events made you more vulnerable to reacting to the prompting event with a problematic chain? Areas to examine are:
  - A. Physical illness; unbalanced eating or sleeping; injury.
  - B. Use of drugs or alcohol; misuse of prescription drugs.
  - C. Stressful events in the environment (either positive or negative).
  - D. Intense emotions, such as sadness, anger, fear, loneliness.
  - E. Previous behaviors of your own that you found stressful coming into your mind.

(continued on next page)

**4. Describe in excruciating detail the CHAIN OF EVENTS** that led to the problem behavior. Imagine that your problem behavior is chained to the precipitating event in the environment. How long is the chain? Where does it go? What are the links? Write out all **links** in the chain of events, no matter how small. Be very specific, as if you are writing a script for a play. Links in the chain can be:

- A. Actions or things you do.
- B. Body sensations or feelings.
- C. Cognitions (i.e., beliefs, expectations, or thoughts).
- D. Events in the environment or things others do.
- E. Feelings and emotions that you experience.

What exact thought (or belief), feeling, or action followed the prompting event? What thought, feeling, or action followed that? What next? What next? And so forth.

- Look at each link in the chain after you write it. Was there another thought, feeling, or action that could have occurred? Could someone else have thought, felt, or acted differently at that point? If so, explain how that specific thought, feeling, or action came to be.
- For each link in the chain, ask whether there is a smaller link you could describe.

**5. Describe the CONSEQUENCES** of this behavior. Be specific. (How did other people react immediately and later? How did you feel immediately following the behavior? Later? What effect did the behavior have on you and your environment?)

**6. Describe in detail** at each point where you could have used a **skillful** behavior to head off the problem behavior. What key links were most important in leading to the problem behavior? (In other words, if you had eliminated these behaviors, the problem behavior probably would not have happened.)

- A. Go back to the chain of behaviors following the prompting event. Circle each link where, if you had done something different, you would have avoided the problem behavior.
- B. What could you have done differently at each link in the chain of events to avoid the problem behavior? What coping behaviors or skillful behaviors could you have used?

**7. Describe in detail a PREVENTION STRATEGY** for how you could have kept the chain from starting by reducing your vulnerability to the chain.

**8. Describe what you are going to do to REPAIR** important or significant consequences of the problem behavior.

- A. Analyze: What did you really harm? What was the negative consequence you can repair?
- B. Look at the harm or distress you actually caused others, and the harm or distress you caused yourself. Repair what you damaged. (Don't bring flowers to repair a window you broke: fix the window! Repair a betrayal of trust by being very trustworthy long enough to fit the betrayal, rather than trying to fix it with love letters and constant apologies. Repair failure by succeeding, not by berating yourself.)

# GENERAL HANDOUT 8

(General Worksheet 3)

## Missing-Links Analysis

Ask the following questions to understand how and why effective behavior that is needed or expected did not occur.

**1. Did you know what effective behavior was needed or expected (what skills homework was given, what skills to use, etc.)?**

**IF NO to Question 1, ask** what got in the way of knowing what was needed or expected. Ideas might include not paying attention, unclear instructions, never getting the instructions in the first place, becoming too overwhelmed and couldn't process the information, and so on.

**PROBLEM-SOLVE** what got in the way. For example, you might work on paying attention, ask for clarification when you don't understand instructions, call others, look up information, and so on.

**2. IF YES to Question 1, ask were you willing to do the needed or expected effective behavior?**

**IF NO to Question 2, ask** what got in the way of willingness to do effective behaviors. Ideas might include willfulness, feeling inadequate, or feeling demoralized.

**PROBLEM-SOLVE** what got in the way of willingness. For example, you might practice radical acceptance, do pros and cons, practice opposite action, and so on.

**3. IF YES to Question 2, ask did the thought of doing the needed or expected effective behavior ever enter your mind?**

**IF NO to Question 3,**

**PROBLEM-SOLVE** how to get the thought of doing effective behaviors into your mind. For example, you might put it on your calendar, set your alarm to go off, put your skills notebook next to your bed, practice coping ahead with difficult situations (see Emotion Regulation Handout 19), and so on.

**4. IF YES to Question 3, ask what got in the way of doing the needed or expected effective behavior right away?** Ideas might include putting it off, continuing to procrastinate, not being in the mood, forgetting how to do what was needed, thinking that no one would care anyway (or no one would find out), and so on.

**PROBLEM-SOLVE** what got in the way. For example, you might set a reward for doing what is expected, practice opposite action, do pros and cons, and so on.