How Do You Decide What to Change?
Then, How Do you Make it Happen?

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Questions

» Do you think who you are makes a difference?
» Does your style match this phase?
» How much is enough?
» When do you know are done (system? family? yourself?)
Behavior Change Phase

- Eliminate referral problems
- Improve family interactions
- Build skills

- Changing behaviors and interactions
- Compliance

- Directive
- Teaching
- Structuring

- Directive
- Teaching
- Structuring

- Facilitating tasks
- Modeling / Coaching
- Homework

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Behavior Change Targets

- Family Member Skills
- Domain-specific modules
- Family Interactions
Matching Behavior Change to Relational Functions

- Every behavior change intervention must be “matched to” family members’ relational functions
- If you do not match to relational functions…
  - You may encounter more resistance to change in the session
  - Families will be less likely to follow through with homework
  - And, even if the family attempts new behaviors in the session, the changes will likely not “stick” long term
Before launching into Behavior Change you must have a good sense of the interpersonal functions in each dyad...

- What are the “typical” relational patterns?
- Consistency and stability in the family and in dyads within the family?
- From these patterns we infer the “relational functions” of:
  - Relational Connectedness
  - Hierarchy
You have assessed your Relational Functions – now what?

- Selecting targets for change
  - Addressing specific risk factors
  - Maximizing or utilizing protective factors or strengths
  - Selecting strategies or tasks (e.g., communication training, problem solving, mood management)
Layering Strategies

- Sequencing strategies over sessions
  - For example, building effective communication and problem solving skills may be precede a focus on helping family members to cope with negative moods without violence
Learning styles

- **Visual**: You could sketch a diagram for visual thinkers.
- **Auditory**: You could stress key words for auditory thinkers.
- **Kinaesthetic**: You could use a "hands-on" approach for kinaesthetic thinkers.

When addressing an audience, you can ensure that your message will reach a greater proportion by using all three modes. A good presentation should include inputs that are:

- **Visual** such as diagrams, charts, pictures.
- **Auditory** such as stories, anecdotes, jokes, puns.
- **Kinaesthetic** with activities and opportunity to move about.

Of course, once you have developed a basic understanding of the VAK model and seen the effects of translating it into practice, you will be keen to understand the principles in greater depth.
Questions

- What are the key considerations in determining behavior change targets?
- What are behavioral patterns?
- What do folks mean by the concept of attainable change?
  - How much should we put on the table over the course of treatment?
  - How do we create deep change for families?
Questions

- What types of activities am I expected to bring in or know during Behavior Change?
  - How can we provide information to trainees without becoming cookie cutter?

- What role do Motivation strategies play in the Behavior Change phase?

- How do I maximize my skills during Behavior Change?
Therapist Skills

- Directive
- Teaching
- Structuring

...shift from interpersonal to structured and directive

...targets at multiple levels, including family, individual, and domains
Match to the Family in the Session

- Consider how to best match strategies to the family in the session – both to their relational functions as well as to their interests and cognitive abilities
  - For example, complex worksheets would not work well with younger kids or a family with limited cognitive abilities – for this family you might present the information and hand write it on a paper, use pictures or a video clip
- Ultimately, your role is to apply effective strategies (“state of the science”) in a way that is tailored to the unique skills/needs and relationship qualities of each family member and family system
Rationale

Prior to introducing a change topic such as communication or problem-solving skills training, the therapist provides a rationale for focusing on the topic

- Why the task is important?
- How it is relevant to this family?

Grounding in referral problem or content, but not necessarily the reframes or themes established in Motivation

- In fact, it is often completely distinct from or unrelated to the content of earlier phases

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Present Task

- Specific instructions
  - What is expected of family or individual members?
    - Clear, direct, brief
    - Provide examples
      - Avoid therapist directives like “Tell him in a way that he can hear.”
  - Therapist should have a clear idea of …
    - What does therapist want to see changed?
    - How will it look when it is changed?
- Matching to family
Behavioral Rehearsal/Modeling

- Facilitate *behavioral rehearsal* of the new skills, including…
  - Modeling the behavior to be learned (e.g., active listening)
  - Providing a negative model of the behavior (e.g., inattentive listening)
  - Having the family members participate in generating examples that they write on a white board or worksheet (key is active involvement)
  - Directing role plays in which the behaviors or skills are practiced
Feedback and Coaching

- Review process as family completes task
- Do not micro-manage or expect perfection
- Highlight positive aspects or behaviors
- Coach (brief, clear, and direct)
- Continue modeling appropriate behaviors
- Gently push family beyond where they typically stop
- Redirect by interruption (strategic validation) when family gets off task

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Feedback and Coaching

- Reinforcement can be a powerful tool in shaping behaviors
- Use reinforcement strategically
  - Early in treatment this may occur in the form of respect and empathy
  - Later in treatment, this can occur when the individual is stuck
Feedback and Coaching

- Encouragement is not necessarily positive feedback
  - “Keep going. You are doing a great job.”
- Whenever possible, try to utilize family members to “encourage” interactions
- More importantly, try to utilize family members to provide positive feedback
  - Reinforcement from family is more powerful than from therapist (sustainability)
Feedback and Coaching

- Permit family to successfully behave in a new way
- Coach without taking over
- Let positive interactions continue without interruption
  - Do not validate (positive feedback individual behaviors) during a transaction
- Provide opportunities for self-correction
  - Do not immediately jump in and micro-manage transactions
Feedback and Coaching

- Punctuate “change” after task has been completed
  - Slow down or stop interaction and review the process from start to completion of task
    - What changed or did not change?
    - What worked well?
    - What did not work?
    - What were family members experiences (thoughts and emotions) throughout the task?
      - Most importantly, contrast new state with initial state
- Punctuation can occur with failed tasks as well as successful tasks
Homework

- Specific task that is accomplishable
  - Usually one the family has successfully resolved in the session
  - High expectation of success
- Clearly presented/understood
- Tasks can be assigned during all phases
  - Matching of task to phase
  - Increasing complexity over time
- Take time to process completion
  - Careful planning is essential to successful implementation of homework
Questions

- Do all sessions have to follow this sequence?
- How long should a Behavior Change session be?
- How much should I try to accomplish in a single session?
Conclusion