Asperger's Disorder Intervention Manual

Goals, Objectives, and Intervention Strategies

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I. *Asperger's Disorder Intervention Manual*

The *Asperger's Disorder Intervention Manual* (ADIM) is a compilation of goals, objectives, and intervention strategies for behaviors on the companion rating scale. It is designed to respond to the most typical behavior problems exhibited by students in educational settings. The interventions are appropriate for any student engaging in the selected behaviors. The student need not be identified as having Asperger's Disorder or handicapped in anyway. The appropriateness of the interventions relates directly to the behavior problem and not to classification labels. The interventions selected reflect positive teacher behavior, contribute to a positive classroom atmosphere, and have been proven to contribute to student success in the educational environment. All interventions included have been found to be successful by administrators, teachers, aides, counselors, parents, and other persons intent on helping students.

The interventions contained in this manual represent solutions which are both preventive and reactive. Preventive interventions are environmental modifications used to reduce variables (e.g., noise, movement, another student, etc.) which may stimulate problem behavior. Reactive interventions "teach" the student more appropriate ways to deal with his/her behavior. These strategies include increased self-control, problem-solving skills, etc.

Some interventions in this manual apply to most students and should be implemented first to provide a more general approach to problem reduction. Other interventions are more specific and should be individually selected for a student based on the appropriateness of the intervention for that student and the situation.

Professional judgment should guide the choice of interventions for any particular student. The student's age, gender, grade level, local community standards, and handicap, if one exists, are all to be considered in selecting appropriate intervention strategies.

For any behavior problem exhibited by students, it will be of value to assess the extent to which institutional variables influence the behavior and possibly contribute to the problem. Limited supervision in play areas, hallways, and during extracurricular activities, as well as arbitrary groups and seating arrangements are examples of factors which are inherent in the educational setting and often contribute to problem behavior. As a first step in improving unsuccessful or inappropriate behavior, institutional variables should be evaluated and reduced. To appropriately respond to individual situations, all related variables in the educational setting which influence student behavior problems should be identified and considered when choosing appropriate interventions to facilitate a student's success. In order not to overlook any historical or contemporary determinants of behavior, other variables to consider are vision, hearing, general health, nutrition, and family case history.

The goals and objectives in this manual were developed to serve as examples which may be used in writing IEPs. Criteria for measuring the success of the student's attainment of the goals and objectives must be determined by those professional educators and parents who are aware of the student's current abilities and program recommendations.

Interventions may be chosen by a team of professionals, a special educator in a self-contained class or functioning in a resource or consultant capacity, or by a regular education teacher. The interventions have been found appropriate for special education, as well as regular education classroom environments.

Use of the same interventions in all settings by all teachers and instructional personnel working with the student facilitates the likelihood of student success in the educational environment. The interventions included in this manual are appropriate for all educational environments and lend themselves particularly well to creating continuity across all the educational settings in which the student functions.

II. Goals, Objectives, and Interventions

1 Avoids looking directly into others' eyes or cannot hold eye contact for appropriate amount of time

Goals:

1. The student will improve his/her ability to look directly into others' eyes.
2. The student will improve his/her ability to hold eye contact for an appropriate amount of time.

Objectives:

1. The student will be able to make direct eye contact _____% of the time.
2. The student will maintain eye contact, when information is being communicated, _____% of the time.
3. The student will make eye contact with a peer when interacting on _____ out of _____ trials.
4. The student will make eye contact with a teacher when interacting on _____ out of _____ trials.

Interventions:

1. Focus on remediating one concern at a time. If focusing on eye contact, avoid working on other areas such as asking for conversation, expecting social interaction, etc.

2. Attempt to provide only one sensory input at a time. Allow the student to look elsewhere, and then ask questions regarding the lesson to determine if he/she is listening. The student may be attending even if he/she is not looking at you.

3. Remove other distracters (e.g., visual, auditory, taste, smell and movement).

4. Use a verbal cue (e.g., "I need your eyes.").

5. Consult with other professionals regarding additional visual difficulties (e.g., Irlen Syndrome, need for glasses with polarized lenses, etc.).

6. Practice making eye contact without the need for performing other tasks, such as listening or interacting.

7. Explain the importance of eye contact in social interaction when appropriate. Include how it makes people feel when eye contact is not given.

8. Get down to eye level with the student.

9. Stay in the student's line of vision.

10. Use exaggerated facial expressions (e.g., wide eyes, big smile, etc.) when successful eye contact is achieved, followed by a verbal cue "Hello," "Thank you," or "Good eyes."

11. Establish rules for listening (e.g., looking at the person who is talking, responding verbally when the other person is done, repeating what is said, asking questions when the message is not understood, etc.). These rules should be followed by everyone in the classroom.

12. Have the student practice appropriate eye contact with the teacher(s).

13. Evaluate the visual and auditory stimuli in the classroom. Determine the amount of stimuli the student can tolerate. Remove the extraneous stimuli from the environment.

14. Ask the student to be the leader of a small group activity if he/she possesses mastery of skills or an interest in that area.

15. Teach and practice effective communication skills. These skills include listening, maintaining eye contact, and positive body language.