Functional Communication Training (FCT)

FCT can improve communication and reduce challenging behaviours.

FCT is a differential reinforcement (DR) procedure where a learner is taught an alternative communication behaviour to get the same class of reinforcement that has maintained a challenging behaviour.

The alternative behaviour communicates what the learner wants and helps them gain access to it. The challenging behaviour does not give them access anymore.

STEPS OF FCT

1 Complete a detailed **functional behavioural assessment (FBA)** of the challenging behaviour.

2 **Identify** a more appropriate way for the learner to communicate wants/needs (i.e., a vocalization, picture, written word or manual sign).

3 **Teach** the alternative behaviour.

4 **Reinforce** the use of the alternative behaviour.

5 **Prompt** the learner to use the alternative behaviour when appropriate.

6 **Minimize or remove** the reinforcement if the challenging behaviour occurs.

7 **Record** data on the use of challenging and alternative behaviours.

Example: As an alternative to pushing items off the table when she finishes an activity, Jane was taught to show a picture that read "all done," and then she would be directed to choose another activity. Data indicated that Jane started using the card daily at center time and pushing items off the table decreased.

FCT can be intensive to implement and may take weeks or months for the learner to use independently.

AUTISM LEARNING PARTNERSHIP

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