

All Behaviors Communicate

Asking Questions and Finding Answers

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All Behaviors Communicate

- **ALL** behaviors even sleep – communicate
- Learners with MDVI have limited ways to communicate
- Meanings (functions/reasons) are often not understood
- MDVI have challenges communicating their physical and emotional feelings

All Behaviors Communicate

- MDVI have difficulty communicating their needs for:
 - Food and drink
 - People
 - More or less sensory stimulation
 - And many other needs

What often happens with behavior?

- PAST: stop the behavior!

- Present: Need to understand what the learner is communicating with their behavior
 - Figuring out the meaning (function/reason) for the behavior is NOT easy!
 - Figuring out the meaning is the FIRST step!!! (not stopping the behavior)

How do we begin?

- Team Approach
 - People who know the learner well (families, teachers, other caregivers) should all participate in discussion about the behavior

Figuring out the behavior: Questions to Ask

- What are the communication ways (forms), environments (contexts), and meaning (function/reason)?
 - Communication form (behavior)
 - Context (people, activity, environment)
 - Function/Reason

Figuring out the behavior: Questions to Ask

- What is the communication form? (behavior)
 - Self-stimulatory behavior (what are examples?)
 - Self-abusive behavior (what are examples?)
 - Aggressive behavior (what are examples?)
 - Pushing things/people away (what are examples?)
 - Passive (non-active) behavior (what are examples?)

Figuring out the behavior: Questions to Ask

- What is the context (the activity, people, and physical environment)?
 - Activity
 - Too difficult
 - Is the activity meaningful
 - Materials motivating, interesting, age appropriate
 - Does the learner have enough time
 - What else???

Figuring out the behavior: Questions to Ask

- What is the context (the activity, **people**, and physical environment)?
 - People
 - Does the learner trust/ like the person?
 - Does the learner have a relationship with the person?
 - Too many people interacting at one time?
 - What else?

Figuring out the behavior: Questions to Ask

- What is the context (the activity, people, and **environment**)?
 - Environment
 - Is the place too noisy?
 - Is the temperature comfortable?
 - Is the place too cluttered?
 - Is the lighting appropriate?
 - Is the environment familiar or new?
 - What else?

Figuring out the behavior: Questions to Ask

- Medical
- Making a request
- Saying “no”
- Making a comment about feelings
- Asking a question
- Sensory input

Figuring out the behavior: Questions to Ask

- What is the meaning (function/reason) for the behavior?
 - #1 question: Is there a medical reason(s) for the behavior?
 - Physical reasons for behaviors
 - Illness
 - Medication
 - Mental health issues

Figuring out the behavior: Questions to Ask

- One behavior (ways/forms) may have different meanings
 - Learner hitting head can mean:
 - Headache OR
 - Boredom OR
 - Tired OR
 - Attention OR
 - Sensory Stimulation OR
 - Feelings

Figuring out the behavior: Questions to Ask

- What is the meaning (function/reason) for the communication?
 - Is the learner making a request?
 - Attention
 - Interaction
 - Food or drink
 - Affection
 - Is the learner refusing or saying “no”
 - Protesting
 - Refusing
 - Wants the activity to stop
 - Wants to escape or leave the activity or person

Figuring out the behavior: Questions to Ask

- What is the meaning (function/reason) for the communication?
 - Is the learner making a comment about feelings?
 - Pain or discomfort?
 - Confused or frustrated?
 - Bored?
 - Afraid?
 - Happy? Angry? Sad?
 - Other?

Figuring out the behavior: Questions to Ask

- What is the meaning (function/reason) for the communication?
 - Is the learner asking a question?
 - What is happening?
 - I need more information...
 - Person
 - Activity
 - Event
 - New place
 - Other?

Figuring out the behavior: Questions to Ask

- What is the meaning (function/reason) for the communication?

- What are other possible meanings (functions/reasons)?
 - Sensory input (get more or escape from)
 - Vestibular
 - Tactile
 - Auditory
 - Visual
 - Smell
 - Taste

Figuring out the behavior: Questions to Ask

- Sensory input
 - What are the learner's likes and dislikes for sensory input? How do you know?
 - If the learner likes the sensory input – why?
 - If the learner avoids sensory input – why?

Do All Human Beings Have Behaviors????

- Do you have behaviors?
 - If yes, what are they?
 - Why do you have the behavior?
- We all seek stimulation!
 - MDVI may seek stimulation with greater intensity

Now that you've answered the questions....

WHAT IS NEXT?????

Forming a Hypothesis: What are the next questions?

- What is the child communicating?
 - EXAMPLE – Katia – Eating rubber – WHY?????

- What is your hypothesis?
 - Kattia **chews rubber** because.....

- How do you know if your hypothesis is right? You must test your hypothesis.

Making a Behavior Plan...

- We must remember:
 - ALL behavior is communication
 - The GOAL is to increase the learner's ability to communicate effectively
 - We MUST provide the learner with an appropriate alternative for their behavior / a better WAY of communicating
 - We MUST NOT punish inappropriate behaviors

Making a Behavior Plan...

Focus on Strengths

- Identify the learner's abilities
- Build self esteem
- Increase communication abilities
- Focus on the positive behavior
- Reinforce the learner for what he or she CAN do
- Take a negative behavior and make it positive / make it appropriate and functional

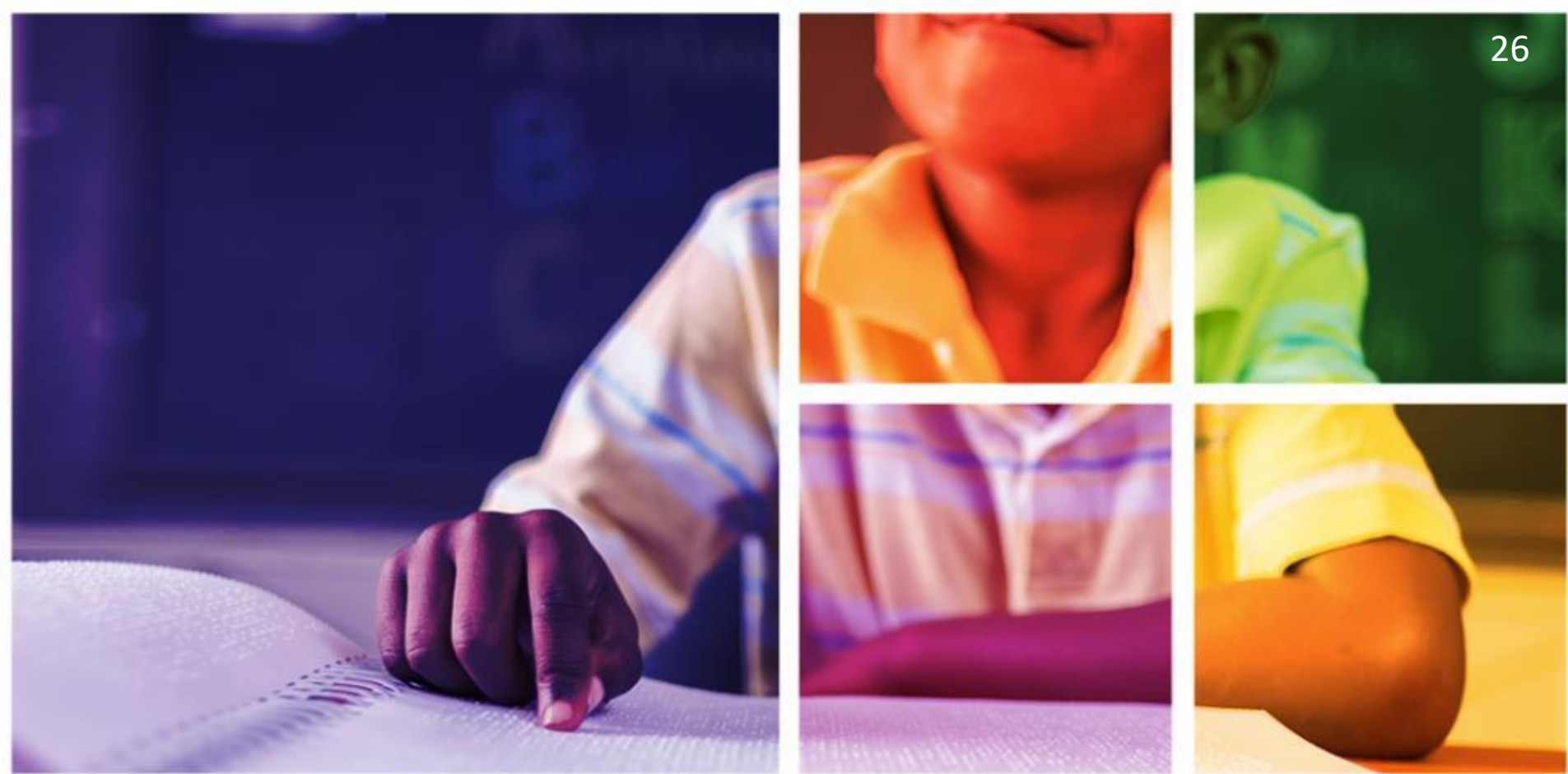
A Quality Program for MDVI

- Functional, meaningful activities decrease inappropriate behaviors

- Learners need:
 - To effectively communicate with others
 - To be actively involved
 - To understand what they are doing / purpose of the activity
 - To understand what the routine is / consistency
 - To be able to anticipate / understand what is happening next
 - To have choices / express their likes and dislikes

MOST IMPORTANT!!!

- Learners need to have effective WAYS to COMMUNICATE!
- Communication is THE priority in a QUALITY program



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