

How to Reduce Challenging Behaviors by Maintaining a Routine During the Summer

June 3, 2020

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Why are we here today?



- What does the word 'routine' mean to you?
 - Restrictive?
 - Structure?
 - Mental health benefits



Mental Health Benefits of Routine

- *Psychology Today: when we know what to expect it's easier to function and adapt to daily struggles*
- *The Lancet: structured routines lead to healthier sleep cycles, and therefore better mental and emotional well-being*
- *Journal of Abnormal Child Psychology: family routines help moderate impulsiveness and oppositional symptoms and traits in children*

The Power of Routines in Your Mental Health




How embracing routines can positively impact your mental health


Posted Oct 04, 2018

THE LANCET
Psychiatry

ARTICLES | VOLUME 5, ISSUE 6, P507-514, JUNE 01, 2018


Association of disrupted circadian rhythmicity with mood disorders, subjective wellbeing, and cognitive function: a cross-sectional study of 91 105 participants from the UK Biobank

Laura M Lyall, PhD   • Cathy A Wyse, PhD  • Nicholas Graham, MBChB • Amy Ferguson, BSc • Donald M Lyall, PhD • Breda Cullen, DClinPsy • et al. [Show all authors](#) • [Show footnotes](#)

Published: May 15, 2018 • DOI: [https://doi.org/10.1016/S2215-0366\(18\)30139-1](https://doi.org/10.1016/S2215-0366(18)30139-1) •  Check for updates

Published: 06 August 2010

Family Routine Moderates the Relation Between Child Impulsivity and Oppositional Defiant Disorder Symptoms

H. Isabella Lanza  & Deborah A. G. Drabick

Journal of Abnormal Child Psychology 39, 83–94(2011) | [Cite this article](#)

1503 Accesses | 29 Citations | 17 Altmetric | [Metrics](#)

How Does this Apply to Children with Autism?

- Individuals with autism show restricted, repetitive patterns of behavior, interests, or activities
- Routine can be a powerful force in helping people with autism deal with the depression, anxiety, and uncertainty that ordinarily confronts them in daily life
- Reinforcing routines can help those with autism to stop relying on them so much as a crutch
- Routine can be powerful in reinforcing a feeling of well-being and stability for individuals with autism

Lack of Routine Leads to Challenging Behavior

- Challenging behavior is any behavior that interferes with a child's learning, engagement, and social interactions with her peers or adults (www.ebip.vkcsites.org)
 - Examples?
- Children engage in problem behavior to communicate
 - What is the child trying to communicate?
- Common functions (or "reasons") for challenging behavior include: (a) to get access to adult attention (positive or negative!), (b) to get access to an item or activity, and (c) to escape attention, a task/direction, or an activity

Figuring Out the Function of Challenging Behavior

- Look for patterns of behavior
 - ABC data sheet
 - FAST

Antecedent-Behavior-Consequence Data Sheet

Setting	Antecedent	Behavior (describe)	Consequence
Date/Time:	<i>Access to tangibles:</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Item removed	<i>Access to attention:</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Verbal attn. removed <input type="checkbox"/> Physical attn. removed <input type="checkbox"/> Peer attn. removed <input type="checkbox"/> Eye contact removed	<i>Access to tangibles:</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Removed item returned <input type="checkbox"/> New item presented
Location:	<i>Escape:</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Task direction given <input type="checkbox"/> Transition/activity change <input type="checkbox"/> Attention given <input type="checkbox"/> Item presented	<i>Other/Automatic:</i> <input type="checkbox"/> No items given/removed <input type="checkbox"/> No attn. given/removed <input type="checkbox"/> No tasks/activity given/removed Other: _____	<i>Access to attention:</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Verbal attn. given <input type="checkbox"/> Physical attn. given <input type="checkbox"/> Peer attn. given <input type="checkbox"/> Eye contact given
Inx/peers involved:		<i>Escape:</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Task direction removed <input type="checkbox"/> Transition/activity no longer required <input type="checkbox"/> Attention removed <input type="checkbox"/> Item removed	<i>Other/Automatic:</i> <input type="checkbox"/> No items given/removed <input type="checkbox"/> No attn. given/removed <input type="checkbox"/> No tasks/activity given/removed <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____

Functional Analysis Screening Tool		
Client: _____ Date: _____		
Informant: _____ Interviewer: _____		
<p>To the Interviewer: The FAST identifies environmental and physical factors that may influence problem behaviors. It should be used only for screening purposes as part of a comprehensive functional analysis of the behavior. Administer the FAST to several individuals who interact with the client frequently. Then use the results as a guide for conducting a series of direct observations in different situations to verify behavioral functions and to identify other factors that may influence the problem behavior.</p>		
<p>To the Informant: Complete the sections below. Then read each question carefully and answer it by circling "Yes" or "No". If you are uncertain about an answer, circle "N/A".</p>		
1. Does the client usually engage in the problem behavior when he/she is being ignored or when caregivers are paying attention to someone else?	[] Yes	[] No [] N/A
2. Does the client usually engage in the problem behavior when requests for preferred activities [games, snacks] are denied or when these items are taken away?	[] Yes	[] No [] N/A
3. When the problem behavior occurs, do you or other caregivers usually try to calm the client down or try to engage the client in preferred activities?	[] Yes	[] No [] N/A
4. Is the client usually well behaved when he/she is getting lots of attention or when preferred items or activities are freely available?	[] Yes	[] No [] N/A
5. Is the client resistant when asked to perform a task or to participate in group activities?	[] Yes	[] No [] N/A
6. Does the client usually engage in the problem behavior when asked to perform a task or to participate in group activities?	[] Yes	[] No [] N/A

Incorporating Routine throughout the Day

- *Modify the environment*
 - *Hypersensitivity*
 - *Hyposensitivity*
- *Increase structure*
 - *Provide a range of acceptable activities that can be chosen*
 - *Use visual supports like a daily timetable or social stories*
 - *Prepare for change and transition, incorporate breaks*

Incorporating Routine throughout the Day

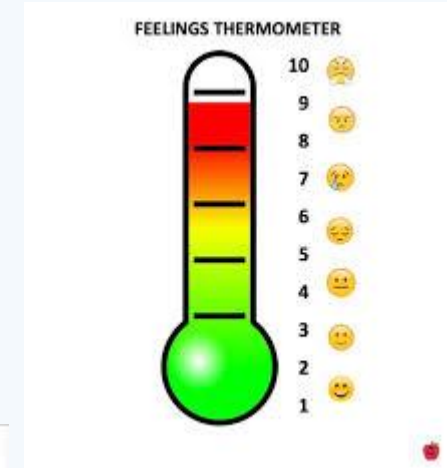
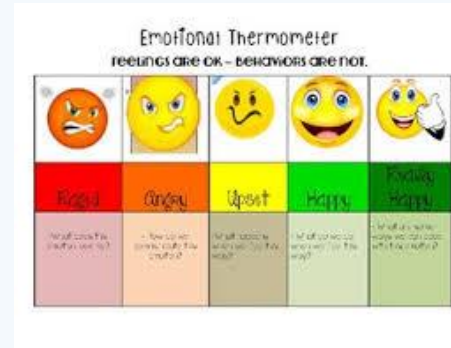
- *Manage anxiety*
 - Breathing exercises
 - Practice verbally expressing emotion
- *Intervene early*
 - Repetitive behaviors, obsessions and routines are generally harder to change the longer they continue

Incorporating Routine throughout the Day

- *Set boundaries*
 - *Set clear, consistent limits – for example, ration an object, the time a person should spend talking about a subject, or the places where they can carry out a given behavior*
- *Provide alternatives*
 - *Think of alternative activities to direct the person to when they have met their quota of the activity you are working on*

Incorporating Routine throughout the Day

- Support skill development
 - Social skills
 - Self-regulation
- Use interests and obsessions functionally
 - Increase skills and areas of interest



Every Person is Unique



- A routine must be unique to the needs of the person
- What works for one will not work for all
- Be patient, keep track of what works and what doesn't work, change what doesn't work



Resources

- Obsessions, repetitive behavior and routines - autism.org/uk
- Verbally expressing emotions - kidshelpline.com.au
- Mental Health and Routine
 - <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/the-gen-y-psy/201810/the-power-routines-in-your-mental-health>
 - [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanpsy/article/PIIS2215-0366\(18\)30139-1/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanpsy/article/PIIS2215-0366(18)30139-1/fulltext)
 - <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10802-010-9447-5>

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