



Success Stories

Challenging Behavior

Alexandra, a young woman diagnosed with autism, was referred to ABA Psychological Services, P.C. for the assessment and treatment of challenging behavior. Her behavior consists of vocal perseverations (e.g. repeating statements made to her or repeating phrases several times) and motor tics (short-lasting sudden repetitive movements). Some motor tics consist of nodding her head repeatedly, while others consist of violently moving her entire body repeatedly. Before treatment was introduced, Alexandra would engage in vocal perseverations between 3-10 times per minute. When she engaged in vocal perseverations, she would continue to repeat the same statement or question until she received the response that she wanted from a family member. Additionally, before treatment was introduced, she would engage in motor tics that lasted several seconds to several minutes. These occurred approximately one time every minute to one time every ten minutes, depending on the day. Both of these behaviors persisted throughout the day. These behaviors significantly interfered with her ability to function at home, school, and in the community. In fact, she had stopped engaging in many extracurricular activities outside of school because of the severity of the behavior.



ABA Program Goals and Solutions

A procedure called Differential Reinforcement of Other Behavior (DRO) was used to decrease vocal perseverations and motor tics. Alexandra was taught to set a vibrating, resetting timer for a pre-specified interval. If she did not engage in motor tics or vocal perseverations during the interval, she would give herself a token. Once she received five tokens, she would receive access to a preferred item. If she did engage in behavior, she would stop the timer, reset it, and restart it. Alexandra was able to learn to start and reset her timer when needed, give herself a token, and get her own reinforcement.

Before treatment was introduced, Alexandra engaged in vocal perseverations between 3-10 times per minute. However, after four weeks of treatment, when the treatment was used, she typically did not engage in vocal perseverations, and when she did, it was usually less than three times in one hour.

Before treatment was introduced, Alexandra engaged in motor tics approximately 1 time every 1-10 minutes. Once treatment was introduced, motor tics decreased dramatically.



Currently, when the treatment is used she rarely engages in motor tics, and when tics occur, it is usually less than one in an hour. Therefore, there was a dramatic reduction in motor tics and vocal stereotypy when treatment was implemented.

In addition, Alexandra has demonstrated a decrease in motor tics and vocal perseverations when the treatment was not used. During the last six sessions, when the treatment was not being used, Alexandra did not engage in any vocal perseverations or motor tics for four of the six sessions.

Alexandra's parents have indicated that she is engaging in motor tics and vocal stereotypy much less frequently than prior to starting the treatment plan, even when the treatment plan is not in place.

Overall, Alexandra is doing well and is able to resume the activities that she was engaged in prior to the increase in motor tics and perseverations.



ABA Psychological Services, P.C.

Location:

New Hyde Park NY, 11040

Directions:

[Google Maps](#)

Phone:

516-294-5000

Website:

<https://abapsychologicalservices.com>