Functions of Behavior

Everything we do happens for a reason. All of our behaviors are communicating something.



Sensory

Sensory (or self-stimulatory) behaviors occur when an individual seeks a pleasant sensory experience or tries to reduce an uncomfortable or overwhelming one.

Ex: Stimming (e.g., rocking, hand flapping, repetitive sounds), covering ears or eyes, chewing objects, seeking specific textures



Escape

Escape behaviors occur when an individual wants to avoid or leave an activity, situation, or interaction that feels overwhelming, difficult, boring, or unpleasant.

Ex: Walking away, refusing to participate, taking frequent breaks, withdrawing or shutting down, procrastinating



Attention

Attention behaviors occur when an individual wants connection, interaction, feedback, or a response from others, which may be positive or negative.

Ex: Interrupting, asking repeated questions, exaggerating stories, acting silly, emotional reactions, rule-breaking



Tangible

Tangible behaviors occur when an individual wants access to a preferred item, activity, or experience.

Ex: Reaching for or pointing to items, asking directly for objects, completing tasks for rewards, grabbing items, waiting in line

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MENTAL HEALTH
& INTELLECTUAL/DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES