



# Applied Behavior Analysis and PWS

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# Agenda

- Introduction to ABA as a science
- Behavior & the Environment
- Behaviors of Concern in PWS from an ABA perspective

# What is ABA?

Applied Behavior (iour) Analysis is

- The science of human behavior
- Interested in how behavior is shaped and maintained
- Interested in how organisms learn
- Best known for therapeutic interventions for ASD
- However, has widespread applications (OBM, health sciences, RFT and ACT)



# Foundational Concepts

Two types of conditioning:

Classical and Operant

Biological predispositions interact with environmental variables to shape behavior:

Behavior “function”

If we know why behavior occurs, we can change it:

Function-based interventions and teaching skills



# Four Functions of Behavior



## Sensory

Behaviors that are performed to gain sensory input or stimulation, such as rocking back and forth, tapping or clicking, or repeatedly touching objects. These behaviors can be a form of self-stimulation or self-soothing.



## Escape

Behaviors that are performed to escape or avoid a situation or activity that is perceived as unpleasant, uncomfortable, or undesirable. It's important to remember that this can include escaping a task that you are unable to do, such as schoolwork.



## Attention

These behaviors are performed in order to receive social interaction or attention from others, and can be either positive or negative attention.



## Tangibles

Behaviors that are performed to gain access to tangible items or preferred activities.

# Behavioral Considerations for PWS

- **Executive Functioning Deficits**

Deficits in executive functioning can predispose challenges with emotional regulation, transitions, flexibility, planning, and problem solving. This can be further complicated by auditory processing delays.
- **Lack of Motivation**

Low muscle tone / fatigue / daytime sleepiness increases response effort for many tasks. “Intrinsic” or existing environmental motivation may be insufficient.
- **Skill Deficits**

Sometimes necessary skills are slow to develop or need to be explicitly taught.
- **Reduced Pain Sensation**

No feedback from the body on body-focused repetitive behaviors such as skin picking.



## Teach Skills

Functionally equivalent alternative,  
incompatible behavior. Etc.

## Reinforcement

Create motivation to work on difficult  
skills and tasks

## Change Environmental Contingencies

Avoid reinforcing behaviors of concern while  
creating motivation to learn and engage in  
adaptive behavior.

# Types of Interventions

# More Resources

<https://www.abainternational.org/about-us/behavior-analysis.aspx>

<https://www.bacb.com/about-behavior-analysis/>

<https://www.autismpeaks.org/applied-behavior-analysis>

<https://theibao.com/>



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Questions?