

Your Punishment Toolkit

Adapted from Parent Management Training by Alan E. Kazdin (2005) & DBT Parent Training Research Version created by Perepletchikova & Axelrod (2009).

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Parent Training Curriculum 2020-2021

Mindfulness &
The Middle Path

Emotion
Regulation
Crisis
Communication

Stress Model of
Crisis
Breaking the
Conflict Cycle

Distress
Tolerance &
Emotional First
Aid
Crisis Co-
Regulation

Change Ready:
Define Behavior,
Positive
Opposite,
Hierarchy
A-VCR

Prompting and
Shaping
Reinforcement

Punishment
Restorative
Justice

Your Punishment Toolkit

- Why do we punish?
- What is punishment?
- Side effects of punishment
- Punishment traps
- When & how to punish effectively
- Punishment techniques: Time out/away, reprimands, taking away privileges, assigning chores, reparations

Motivations for punishment

Why do we punish?

- Sense of justice (“sentence should fit the crime”)
- To teach a lesson to child (i.e. respect authority, right vs. wrong)
- To establish control
- To set an example for others
- “Spare the Rod, Spoil the Child”
- To change behavior?



Punishment Defined

- Punishment suppresses or reduces an unwanted behavior & teaches what **not** to do
- Suppression or reduction is temporary because you have not taught them what **to** do
- **Punishment by itself does not teach the desired behaviors.** Punishment can be effective only when it is used together with a reinforcement of the desired behaviors.

"If a child doesn't know how to read...we teach."

"If a child doesn't know how to swim...we teach."

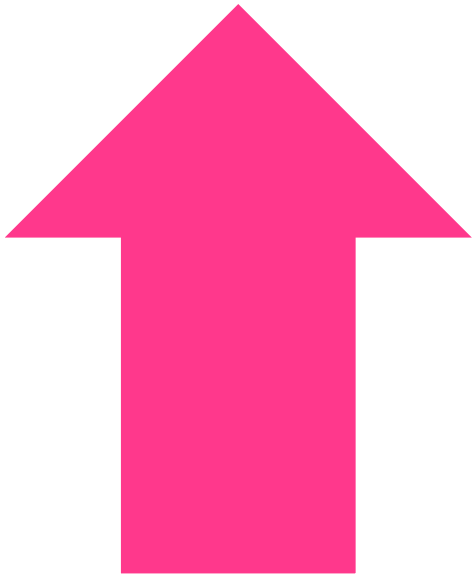
"If a child doesn't know how to multiply...we teach."

"If a child doesn't know how to drive...we teach."

"If a child doesn't know how to behave...we.....teach?.....punish?"

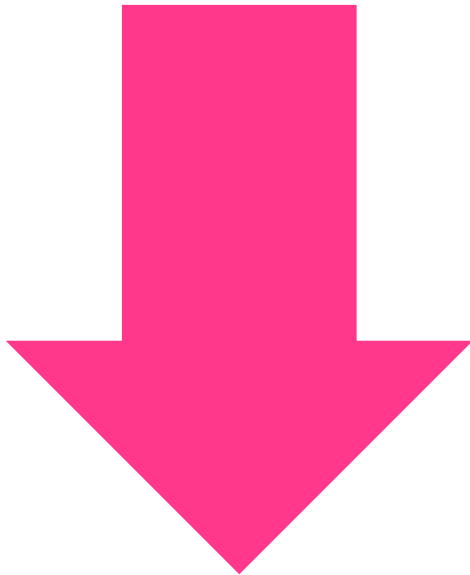
Why can't we finish the last sentence as automatically as we do the others

-Tom Herner (NASDE President) Counterpoint



Reinforcement

- Increases how often a behavior will occur



Punishment

- Decreases how often a behavior will occur

Side effects of punishment

- ***Emotional Reactions***

- ✓ Strain relationships with caregiver
- ✓ Decrease effectiveness of caregiver praise/reinforcement
- ✓ Increase chances of other negative behaviors happening
- ✓ Create fewer chances to learn & practice desired behaviors



Where did we ever get the crazy idea that in order to make children DO BETTER, first we have to make them FEEL WORSE?"

--Jane Nelsen, Ed.D.

Side effects of punishment

- *Avoidance behaviors*
- *Aggression*
- *Modeling punishment*



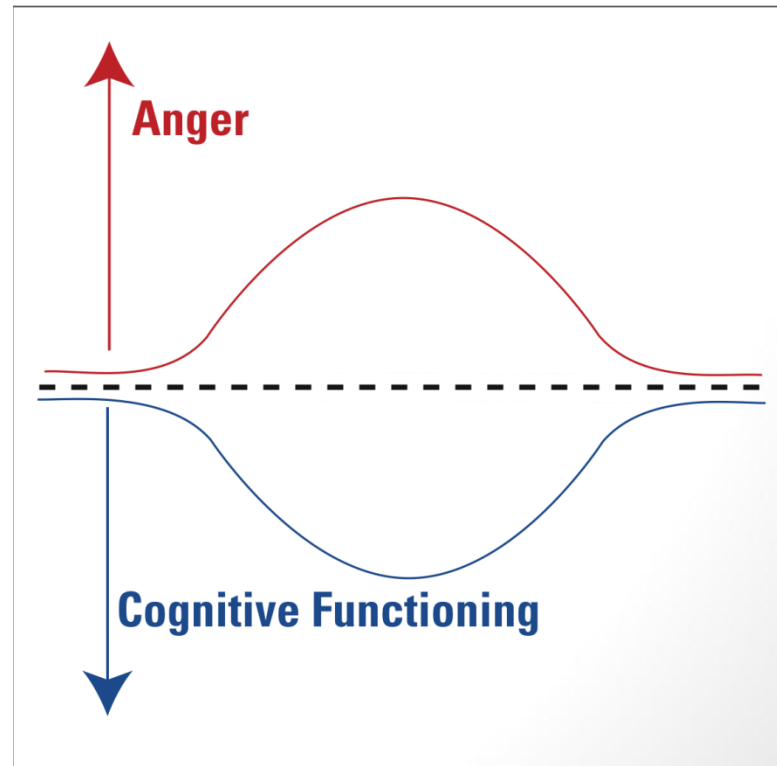
Punishment traps for caregivers:

- 1. Short-term suppression may be interpreted as long-term change**
 - Punishment can effectively suppress a negative behavior in a moment, so we may believe that punishment is working to change behavior long-term.
- 2. Use of punishment techniques is reinforcing for CAREGIVERS**
 - Punishment immediately stops the unwanted behavior. This can be reinforcing for caregivers.
- 3. Punishment leads to escalation of punishment**
 - Children desensitize to punishment. More severe & prolonged punishment is needed to achieve the same results.

Do not punish When You Are Angry!!

When we are at our angriest...

...we are at our stupidest."



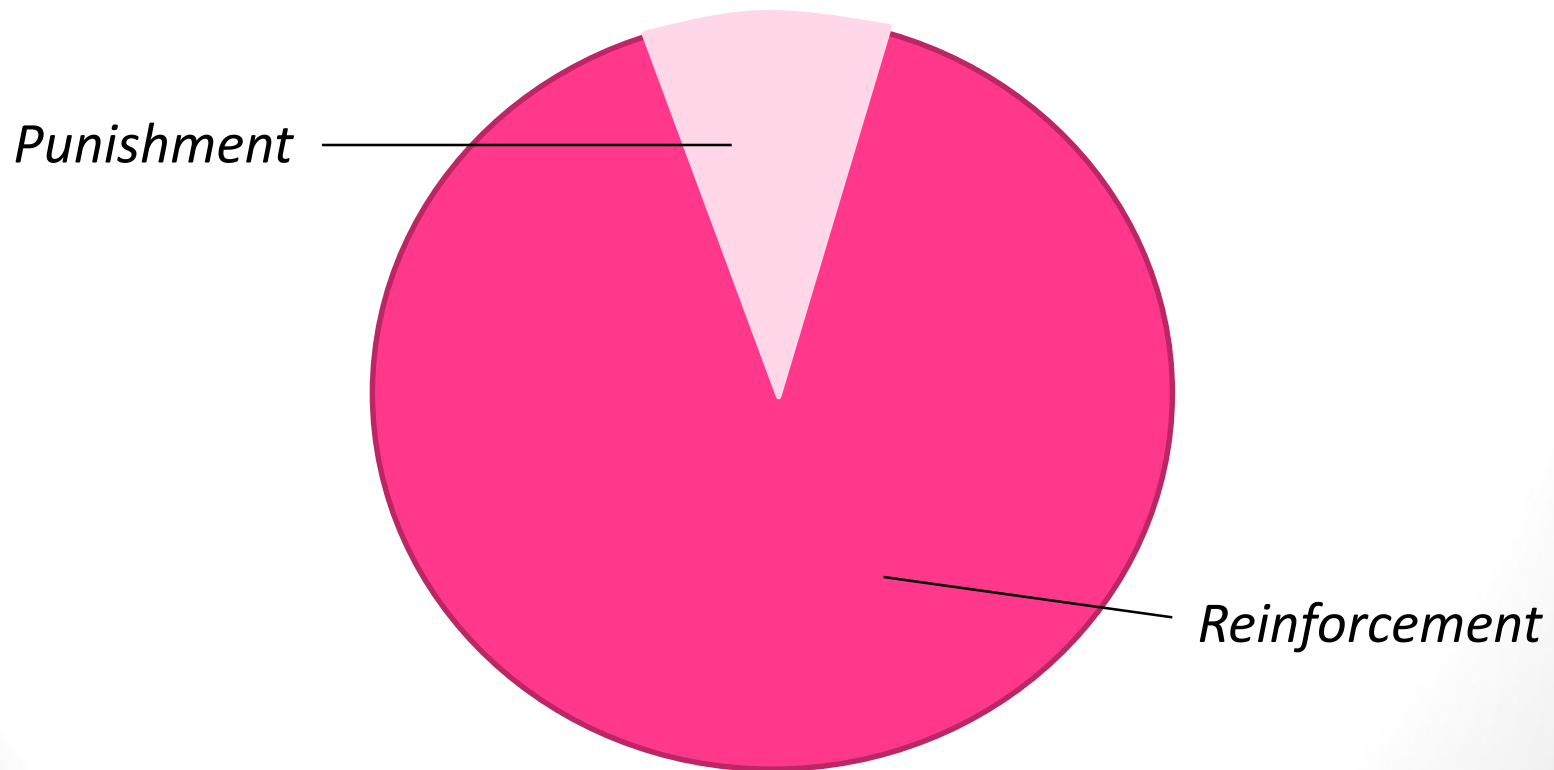
When punishment is useful

Punishment is a procedure to be used very cautiously because of its side-effects and short-term effectiveness. Brief and mild punishments can enhance the effectiveness of a reinforcement program in several specific circumstances:

- ***When behavior is dangerous to oneself or others & cannot be ignored.*** In such cases, immediate intervention is required to suppress the unwanted behavior and prevent injury and damage.
- ***Reinforcement of the desired behaviors cannot be easily administered.***

Reinforcement and Punishment Combined

Combine with a reinforcement program that teaches a desirable behavior that competes with the unwanted behavior.



How to Punish Effectively

- ❑ Contingency: make clear the connection between the behavior and the outcome

✓ “If _____, then _____”
(behavior) (outcome/ consequence)

- ❑ Make sure it's not a source of reinforcement

✓ Is the behavior being reinforced (encouraged) in some way?
(i.e. attention, avoidance of challenging task)

- ❑ If you are punishing the same behavior a few times a day for more than one day, stop & change the program.

How to Punish Effectively

- ❑ Keep it brief & mild
- ❑ Implement immediately
- ❑ Be consistent
- ❑ Vary punishment techniques
- ❑ Do not use activities that you want to encourage (e.g., reading, homework, daily chores) as punishment.
- ❑ Avoid “piggy-backing/caboosing.”

Types of Punishment

1. Punishment by applying something a person experiences as negative (e.g., reprimands, time out, chores).
2. Punishment by taking away something a person views as positive, such as a privilege (e.g., watching TV, playing a computer game, going out with friends).
3. Natural consequences---outcomes that occur naturally without caregiver interference

Reprimands

What is a reprimand?



- Verbal expression and/or gesture of disapproval
- Used to suppress or reduce child's undesirable behaviors & relatively mild negative behaviors, in the moment
- Used for behaviors that cannot be effectively ignored as they may be dangerous (may lead to falling down or breaking property, etc.)

Reprimands

What are some examples of problem behaviors that are appropriate to reprimand?

- Running in an unsafe location
- Speaking disrespectfully
- Yelling/arguing
- Playing too loudly or unsafely
- Roughhousing



Effective Reprimands

- Be **specific**
- Use a **firm & calm** tone of voice
- Stay **close**, but don't touch
- Use **non-verbal expressions of disapproval**



How to Give a Reprimand

Components of an effective reprimand:

1. What to stop
2. Why
3. What to do instead (prompt)
4. If child is compliant, praise the desired behavior

How to Give a Reprimand

What to do when it doesn't work:

- If child is not compliant, give choice of positive behavior again or loss of privilege.
- If he/she chooses the positive behavior, praise the positive behavior.
- If not, remove the privilege.

Taking Away Privileges

What is it?

- Taking away something the person views as positive
- A mild punishment technique useful as a back-up to other punishment techniques
- When using this technique, make sure that the child experiences the activity as enjoyable and a privilege



Guidelines for Taking Away Privileges

1. **RESPECTFUL**---use normal tone of voice---if you can't deal with it calmly, wait until you're calm
2. Try to make the consequence **RELATED** to the misbehavior
3. **REASONABLE in duration**---Increase in duration will not make this technique more successful but may actually interfere with its effectiveness.
4. **REVEALED** in advance
5. **REALISTIC**---Make sure that you have control over privileges; otherwise the child may just ignore this punishment.

Time Out from Reinforcement

What it is...

- For a brief period of time, the child does not have access to reinforcers ---rewards, yelling, lecturing, any kind of attention at all---that can perpetuate unwanted behavior.
- Effectiveness of time-out (time away) depends on what happens during time-in--- a reinforcement program that rewards the behavior you want to see.



Time Out from Reinforcement

When to use it...

- To suppress moderate level dangerous and aggressive behaviors (e.g., hitting, biting, pushing, threatening, roughhousing that results in unintentional property damage)
- Sparingly

Time Out from Reinforcement

What it isn't...

- Giving the child a chance to think about what they did wrong, or taking a needed break
- In a specific location: You do not need to remove child from the situation, as long as you are removing reinforcers (i.e. attention)

Time Out Options

Time-out from Electronic/ Toys

Time-out from activity

Time-out from attention

Time Out from Reinforcement

How to do it...

- Praised when done appropriately
- Completed by the child quietly & calmly
- Stopped when not working & replaced with another consequence (i.e. taking away privilege, assigning a chore)

Assigning a chore/task

- Used to suppress negative behaviors that occur infrequently
- Select chores that the child is not usually responsible for and can complete (e.g., cleaning a garage or toilet, raking leaves, weeding garden)
- **Remember**, the chore is not about the product or the quality of the work. The chore is about having the child engage in a boring activity for an assigned amount of time.
- If child does not accept the chore, take away a privilege

Reparations

- Allow the consequence to be:
 - Complete a chore for the person they wronged
 - Perform acts of kindness for the person they wronged
 - Restitution for something destroyed/damaged/stolen
 - An apology/apology letter---both parties need to be willing!
 - Just processing out the situation



Questions



References

- © Perepletchikova & Axelrod (2009). Adapted from Rathus, & Linehan (2006). Dialectical Behavior Therapy: Multi-Family Skills Training Group and Kazdin, A.E. (2005) Parent Management Training: Treatment for oppositional, aggressive, and antisocial behavior in children and adolescents.