

Self Control / Self-Management

“Self” as Controller of Behavior

- Radical behaviorism → causes of behavior are found in the environment
- Problem:
 - Some causal variables are not apparent in the immediate environment,
 - Creates a tendency to point to internal causes of behavior
 - Willpower, Drive, etc.

Skinner

First to apply philosophy & theory of radical behaviorism to actions typically considered to be controlled by the self

- Self-Control
 - Two-response phenomenon
 - Controlling response
 - Controlled response
- See Science and Human Behavior by Skinner

Controlling Response

- Affects variables in a way that influences the probability of a controlled response occurring

Controlled Response

- Relates to self-management of a behavior
- Is the actual behavior emitted to control the target behavior

Three Terminology Problems with Self Control

- Brigham: Self control implies the ultimate control of the behavior relies within the person
 - Control is learned from interactions with the environment (your experiences with the environment)
- Baum: Self control implies there is a separate controlling self inside the person
 - Relies on mentalistic models to explain behavior
- Mischel and Gilligan: Self control implies ability to delay gratification
 - The term becomes both the independent and dependent variable for the same behavior. - Becomes confusing

Better Term Self-Management

- Target behavior the person wants to change (i.e. “controlled response”)
- Self-management behavior (i.e. “controlled response”)

Today

- Self-Control is not the same as Self-Management
- Relates to the relationship between immediate and delayed consequences.
- Can be related to behavior change tactics used to modify behavior.

Immed. Vs. Delayed Conseq.

- | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------|
| • Immediate Pos. Conseq. | Taking Cod Liver Oil |
| • Delayed Pos. Conseq. | No Heart disease |
| • Immediate Neg. Conseq. | Going to Dentist |
| • Delayed Neg. Conseq. | Root Canal |

Self-Management: Points to Note

- Encompasses one time & long running self-management events
- Desired change in target behavior must occur for self-management to be demonstrated

Reasons for Self-Management

- Live a more effective & efficient daily life
- Break bad habits & replace with good ones
- Accomplish difficult tasks
- Achieve personal goals

Advantages of Self-Management

- Influence behaviors not accessible to external change agents
- External change agents can miss important instances of behavior
- Promote generalization & maintenance of behavior change
- Small repertoire of self-management skills can control many behaviors

More Advantages

- People with diverse abilities can learn self-management skills
- Some people perform better under self-selected tasks & performance criteria
- People with good self-management skills contribute to more efficient & effective group environments

Even More Advantages

- Teaching students to use self-management skills provides meaningful practice for other areas of school curriculum
- Ultimate goal of education
- Benefits society
- Helps a person feel good
- Feels good

Primary Feature of Self-Management

- Manipulation of antecedent stimuli to the target (controlled) behavior
 - Environmental planning
 - Situational inducement

Antecedent-Based Techniques

1. Manipulating MO's to make a desired (or undesired) behavior more (or less) likely
2. Providing response prompts
3. Performing initial steps of a behavior chain
4. Removing materials required for an undesired behavior
5. Limiting undesired behavior to restricted stimulus conditions
6. Dedicating a specific environment for a behavior

Manipulating Motivating Operations

- General strategy:
 - Behave in a way (controlling behavior)...
 - that creates a certain state of motivation that, in turn...
 - increases (or decreases as desired) the subsequent frequency of the target behavior (controlled behavior)

Providing Response Prompts

- Wide variety of forms (e.g. visual, auditory, textual, symbolic)
- Generic response prompt
- Specific response prompt
- Prompt repeated performance of a behavior in a variety of situations & settings
- Supplemental response prompts (provided by others)

Performing Initial Steps of a Behavior Chain

- Ensures you are later cued with a S^D that reliably evokes the target behavior

Removing Items Necessary for an Undesired Behavior to Occur

- Alter the environment so that an undesirable behavior is less likely or impossible to emit

Limiting Undesired Behavior to Restricted Stimulus Conditions

- Decrease the frequency of an undesired behavior by limiting the setting or stimulus conditions under which the person engages in the behavior

Dedicating a Specific Environment for a Desired Behavior

- Reserve or create an environment where the person will only engage in that behavior
- Special stimulus arrangement that can be turned on & off in a multipurpose setting

Self-Monitoring

- Procedure whereby a person observes his behavior systematically & records the occurrence or nonoccurrence of a target behavior
 - Also called self-recording or self-observation
- Originally conceived as a method of clinical assessment
 - For behaviors only the client could observe & record
 - Became a major therapeutic intervention because of reactance effects
- Problem: Behavior reverts to old behavior as time progresses

Self-Evaluation

- Comparison of person's performance with a predetermined goal or standard
- Involves the use of self-monitoring with goal setting
- Also called self-assessment

Self-Monitoring with Reinforcement

- Self-monitoring may be part of an intervention package that includes reinforcement
 - For achieving self selected goals
 - For achieving teacher selected goals
- Reinforcer may be
 - Self-administered
 - Delivered by Others

Guidelines & Procedures for Self-Monitoring

- Good directions are essential
 - Must know what behaviors to include or exclude
 - Must know what to record
- Provide materials that make self-monitoring easy
- Provide supplementary cues or prompts
- Self-monitor the most important dimension of the target behavior
- Self-monitor early & often
- Reinforce accurate self-monitoring

Technologies to help with Self-Monitoring

- Variety of mechanisms can be utilized to measure the target behavior
- Do not need to be complicated
 - Paper & pencil
 - Wrist counters
 - Pennies in different pockets

Supplementary Cues or Prompts

- Variety of stimuli can prompt self-recording (e.g. auditory, visual, & tactile)
 - Auditory: prerecorded tones or signals
 - Visual: written instruction or symbols
 - Tactile: Motivaider® – signals through vibration

Techniques

- Each occurrence of the target behavior should be self-recorded as soon as possible
 - Act of self-monitoring should not disrupt the occurrence of the target behavior
 - Self-monitoring should occur more often at the beginning of a behavior change program
 - Frequency of monitoring can decrease if performance improves

Reinforce Accurate Self-Monitoring

- Especially when participants are utilizing self-recorded data for self-evaluation & self-administered consequences
- You need accurate data so you can tell if progress in changing the behavior is occurring

Self-Administered Consequences

- Self-reinforcement should not be considered synonymous with the principle of operant behavior (Skinner, 1953)
- Performance-management contingencies are best viewed as rule-governed analogs of reinforcement & punishment contingencies
 - Response-to-consequence delay is too great

Self-Administered Consequences

- Increase or Decrease desired behavior
- Problem, we always give ourselves the reinforcer, often do not administer the punisher

Recommendations for Self-Administered Consequences

- Select small, easy-to-deliver consequences
- Set a meaningful but easy-to-meet criterion for reinforcement
- Eliminate “bootleg reinforcement”
- Put someone else in control of delivering consequences (if necessary)
- Keep it simple

Other Self-Management Tactics

- Self-instruction
- Habit reversal
- Self-directed systematic desensitization
- Massed practice

Self-Instruction

- Self-generated verbal responses, covert or overt, that function as response prompts for a desired behavior
- Often used to guide a person through a behavior chain or sequence of tasks

Habit Reversal

- Typically implemented as a multiple-component treatment package
 - Self-awareness
 - Response direction
 - Identify events that precede & trigger the response
 - Use competing response training
 - Motivation techniques
 - Self-administered consequences
 - Social support systems
 - Procedures for promoting generalization & maintenance

Self-Directed Systematic Desensitization

- Substituting one behavior (generally muscle relaxation) for the unwanted behavior (fear/anxiety)
 - Wolpe
 - Develop Hierarchy of situations of least to most fearful is developed
 - Gradual exposure to each situation is then accomplished
 - First imagining each situation
 - Then actual real life (in vivo) situation

Massed Practice

- Forcing oneself to perform an undesired behavior again and again
- Sometimes decreases the future frequency of the target behavior

Conducting an Effective Self-Management Program

- Specify a goal & define the behavior to be changed
- Begin self-monitoring the behavior
- Contrive contingencies that will compete with natural contingencies
- Go public with your commitment to change your behavior
- Get a self-management partner
- Continually evaluate your self-management program & redesign it as necessary

Conclusions

- Self-Management technologies can be very effective at changing behavior
- Can be used with a wide variety of behavior
- Can be done by individual or with others
- May need close monitoring to ensure maximum success